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Interviews Reviews Free DVD

ONCE I DISCOVER THE ABSENCE OF UNDO FUNCTIONS IN REAL LIFE ART, I GO CRYING BACK TO MY COMPUTER - PAGE 46







Tim Biskup, Linda Bergkvist, Jonny Duddle, Jason Chan and loads more!

Aly Fell is a concept artist working at Eurocom Entertainment Software,

"In the past, I've usually scanned in pencil sketches and worked them up in Photoshop, but here I did a number of rough drawings directly in the software," says Aly. "Then, selected one and started adding

being "all over the shop." They range from "retro flying stuff to The Great

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Introducing...

FANTASY&SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

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CONTRIBUTIONS
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Featured artists

Every month, ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and share their techniques and inspiration...



Henning Ludvigsen



This month we paid a visit to Athens to meet up with one of our own personal favourite fantasy

artists, Henning Ludvigsen. Read all about what we discovered about the artist in our exclusive interview on page 46, and then turn to page 68 to learn the secret techniques behind the stunning work of this incredibly talented artist.

www.henningludvigsen.com



Jim Burns



Jim Burns is one of our heroes, so it seemed only right to meet up with the seminal sci-fi artist and

find out what makes him tick. A man who has illustrated some of the most popular sf and fantasy books, Jim has recently released Imago, a new collection of sketches and paintings. Find out more at his site below, and in our interview on page 52.

www.jimburns.co.uk



Gary Tonge



We talk to the UK concept artist with a passion for space and time. in our artist portfolio

interview, beginning on page 56. Find out what Gary thinks about the universe, how there must be other life out there and how the artist loves using colour to make his audience feel cold, happy, sad, in awe, or scared (but possibly not at the same time).

www.visionafar.com



Todd Lockwood



Over the last few months, there has been a massive response to our resident columnist's words

of art wisdom. Find out what he's thinking about this month on page 26, and don't forget to let him know what you think of his opinions by emailing him on

todd@imaginefx.com. Check out his website below to see his awesome portfolio.

www.toddlockwood.com



John Kearney



Concept artist, digital painter and all-round über artist John Kearney joins our expert panel this

month, answering your digital art questions. And what better subject to tackle than alien beasts? See how John takes a sketch to a finished piece in our Artist Q&A, beginning on page 34. See more of his excellent digital painting at the site below.

www.j-k.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk



Mattias Snygg



No matter how innovative you are, or how inspirational you find our galleries. without a

grounding in art techniques, you may fall at the first hurdle when starting out with digital painting. Luckily, renowned artist Mattias Snygg is on hand to guide you through some basic concepts. This month it's mark-making. See page 98

www.mattiassnygg.com



Editor's letter

Welcome! It's all about the art...



This month, I had the pleasure of interviewing our Rising Star, the incredibly talented Linda Tso (page 42). I couldn't resist but ask her *the* question regarding where she saw fantasy art in the grand scheme of things. The question was of course loaded – wanting to spark a debate on how fantasy art is viewed by 'the art

establishment', fine artists, college lecturers and so on. Linda's response however – commenting on the fact that it doesn't actually matter what the 'elitists' think, as long as you are happy with your creations and there are others to share your enthusiasm – really struck a chord.

And that's all we're about here at ImagineFX – art and community. Take a look through our FXPosé pages (beginning on page 10) for instance, and you'll find a global selection of artists demonstrating their creative talent. Interviews with such artistic forces as Henning Ludvigsen (page 46) and Gary Tonge (page 56) follow, while our extensive workshops section (page 67) and free DVD prove how much those in the fantasy and sci-fi art community are willing to share with

one another. Enjoy issue three, and I'll see you next month...

Rob Carney, Editor rob@imaginefx.com

Tell us what you think!

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FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART IN A SCI-FI DIGITA

Subscribe now! Turn to page 55

United States readers turn to page 73

Five things...

you'll find in this issue of ImagineFX

Drawing expertise
All-conquering artist Jonny
Duddle teaches you the basics of
digital sketching. Unmissable! Page 84

Go pro!
How to go from amateur
doodler to professional concept
artist with advice from those who have
made it big... Page 22

Monster, monster
ImagineFX introduces Jon
Kearney... he shows you the
process of turning an idea into a
finished piece of digital art Page 34



Look behind you!
Create an amazing fantasy woodland scene using
Daz|Studio, Bryce, Poser and
Photoshop with Adam Benton Page 74

That Meddlesome Muse is back, unleashed from the psyche, to torture the artwork of her hapless host. A venture into the neurotic and surreal.

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Three copies of Photoshop CS2 worth £1,707

"There have got to be some kick-ass spaceships out there" Gary Tonge (page 56)

April 2006 Imagine X



Reader THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Aaron Sng

LOCATION: Singapore WEB: www.aerythes.com EMAIL: sng@aerythes.com



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"I started doodling before I began schooling," says Aaron, poetically. As a youngster, drawing remained a hobby. "I didn't

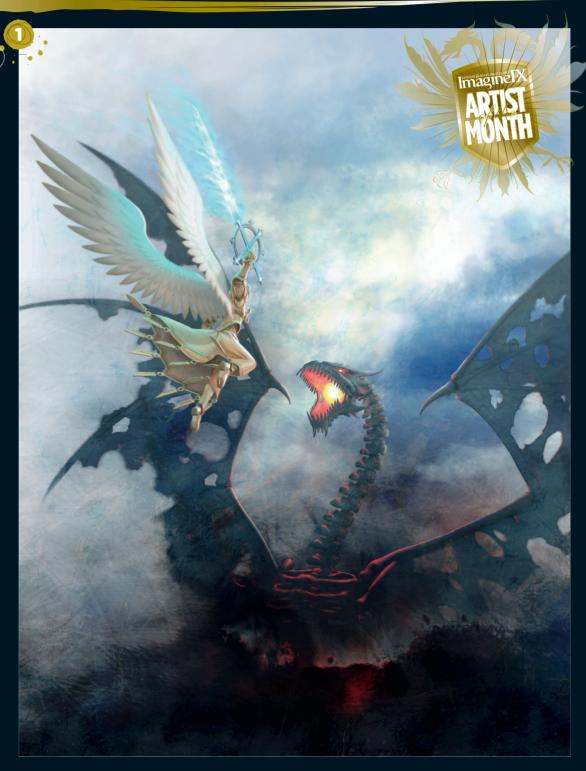
paint because I hated washing brushes!" Aaron wanted to work in either games or cartoons, but studied computer science at university. "After graduation, I finally decided to make a career out of art." Aaron trained himself as a 3D modeller and went to work for a visual simulation company that has now morphed into an animation studio. He is hooked on digital painting: "Hurrah, no need to wash brushes!"

ANGEL AND THE DRAGON This piece was done for the Heroes of Might & Magic V poster contest, organised by Nival Interactive.

THE VALKYRIE This is a mythological lucky dip: "Norse myth Valkyrie, Greek myth Pegasus and Japanese myth Spirit butterfly."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH
Aaron Sng wins a copy of Exotique,
showcasing the world's best CG
females, and Painter, featuring the latest and greatest Corel Painter art. Find out more at: www.ballisticpublishing.com.

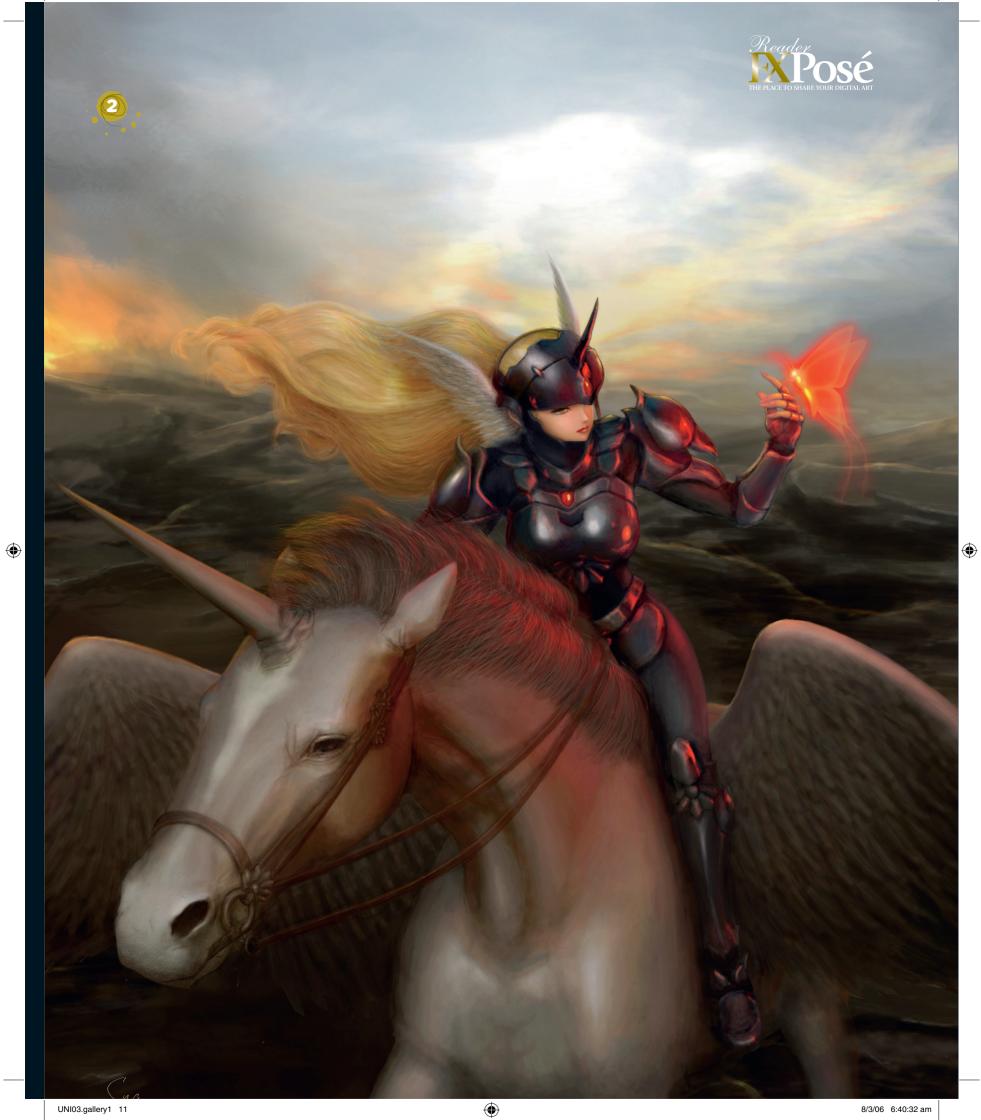


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Adam Geyer

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LOCATION: US
WEB: www.adamgeyer.com
EMAIL: ahdamn7@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop over acrylics

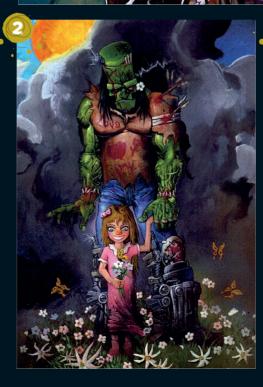
Adam gets asked lots of questions about the subject matter of his paintings: "I paint this stuff simply because it's what I like to

paint," he explains. "It's my state of mind. Art is reaching into your mind and exposing your vision. Not everyone is going to like my vision." Adam is not that keen on some of them himself, but there is one unalloyed good: "Painting keeps me out of trouble." Inspiration? "Well, lately I've been spending a lot of time in the attic. And occasionally I make trips to the cellar." We're not entirely sure what he's suggesting when he adds: "That's where THEY are."

voodpoo PRIESTESS Adam met Stacey E. Walker at a comic convention. "We agreed I'd paint her and I turned her into my Voodoo Priestess." This is the cover for an as yet unpublished comic book, called Papa Zuzu.

A DARK CLOUD RISING Frankenstein is one of Adam's favourite characters because: "Like me, it's hard to tell what he's thinking or what he'll do next."

THE WELCOMING "She's something I had in my head for a long time that needed to get out. I had to force her out."





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lmägine IX April 2006





Richard Michael Raidel

LOCATION: Germany
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DETWARE: 3ds max, Photoshop



"I started with art rather late," reckons Richard. "It wasn't till the age of 16 that I began to draw and model 3D art." His main reason for

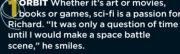
taking this up was stress: "I needed a hobby to relax from work. Fantasy and sci-fi always fascinated me, so it was a natural choice. I like too make my own versions of these ideas." For the time being this is a hobby. "I still use it to relax from my more mundane day job, but I might want to take it to a professional level, if my current job doesn't offer me any better prospects."

ORBIT Whether it's art or movies, books or games, sci-fi is a passion for Richard. "It was only a question of time until I would make a space battle

CHINESE DRAGON NOODLES
Richard says he is a big fan of
dragons: "So a lot of the 2D drawings
and paintings I make have these as

FLIGHT FROM THE STORM "I wanted the cloud cover to form a sort of cave, with the salvation of clear skies ahead," comments the artist. "It is meant to have a dreamlike feeling."

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subjects. This idea just hit me some day and I just had to draw. I think it's terribly cute."









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Matthew Bradbury

LOCATION: UK
EMAIL: mattbradbury2000@
yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2 and a

graphics tablet

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Matt turned his painting hobby into a professional occupation as a freelance fantasy illustrator just a couple of years ago. So far,

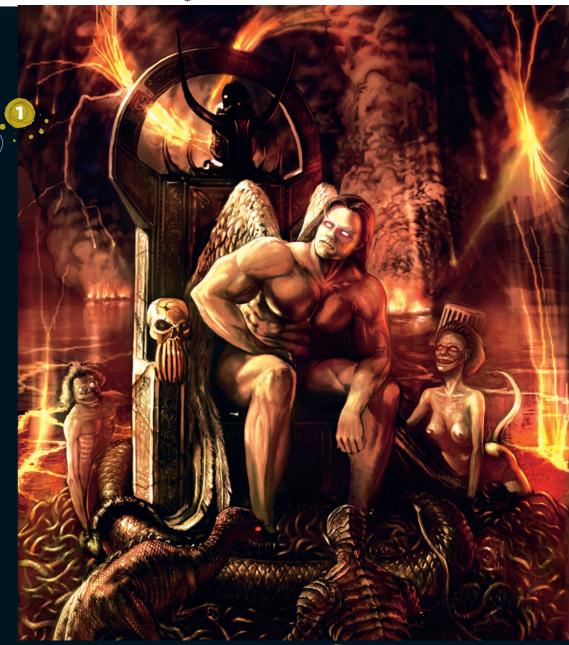
couple of years ago. So far, his clients have mostly come from the US: "Predominantly it's been card art or RPG stuff and most of that hasn't been marketed yet," he says. "It's been a fairly steep learning curve for me and in a lot of ways I'm still learning." His work speaks of a budding talent looking for an outlet. "Only time will tell if I can survive in what is a very competitive field!" You have to keep the faith, and so he does: "I have high hopes for the future."

FALLEN ANGEL A depiction of ucifer: "But not in his usual form," explains Matt. This image was created in black and white, before being coloured using layers.

RELIC "An ancient relic from a long forgotten war," says Matt. The greenery required some serious custom brush work

cYBORG 275 "This was a lot of fun!" Matt imagined a world where convicts were thought of as property, cybernetically enhanced and used as workers in dangerous mining facilities. "275 is trying to escape but I don't think he's going to get very far!"

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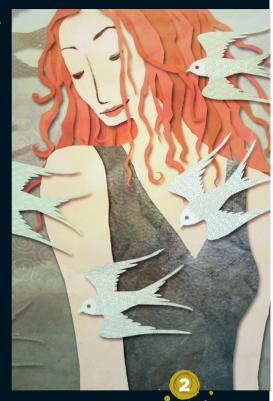


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Ken Wong LOCATION: Hong Kong WEB: www.kenart.net

WEB: www.kenart.net EMAIL: ken@kenart.net

Born and raised in Australia, but now living in Hong Kong, Ken Wong describes himself as a concept designer, illustrator and all round digital artist. His style is highly adaptive but with a strong painterly edge to it. Most recently, Ken has been working at Enlight Software as an art director. While there, he was involved with the upcoming title, American McGee's Bad Day LA. His work already has a considerable following, having appeared in Spectrum and Exposé

THE MOCK TURTLE'S STORY
a competition entry, this image illustrates a scene from Alice in Wonderland. "I chose Alice's meeting with the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle," says Ken. "The latter of which is surely the most absurd character ever."

books. Ken has spoken at the Animex animation and games festival.

TORI This is based on singersongwriter Tori Amos. "I decided to use a paper cut-out style I had explored in the past, but which I had not really used in a finished piece."

TWO SET OUT IN DARK WATERS A work created in a few hours. "This was just a bit of fun. It began with a pencil drawing."

April 2006 lmägine X



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WEB: www.fingerindustries.co.uk/ davidmillgate.htm

EMAIL: david.millgate@tiscali.co.uk
SOFTWARE: Painter IX, Photoshop CS



A comic, concept and storyboard artist for 18 years, David has a distinctive approach to scifi and fantasy art. He has

extensive experience in 2D and 3D animation, as art director and "all round creative/ideas person." His long interest in all things fantastic has brought him notoriety among the genre's fans. His work is usually begun in traditional fashion, then he takes to the computer to progress it in Photoshop and Painter.

sheraah Jungle Queen "I was trying to create a certain early morning mood and atmosphere," says David. "The sun is just beginning to shine through the forest and there's a slight mist in the air."

E.V.E Dave forgot he'd entered this in the International Manga and Anime Festival. "Six months later, I got a call saying it'd won the Best Character Design Award! I won \$5,000 and was interviewed in manga publications."

THING FROM HELL David relishes coming up with hideous, hellish monsters: "All jagged teeth, rancid flesh and ouzing slime!"







lmagine X April 2006







Joe Vinton
Location: UK
WEB: www.renderosity.com/gallery.ez
?ByArtist=Yes&Artist=orbital
EMAIL: joe.vinton@btopenworld.com
SOFTWARE: Bryce 5, Photoshop 7



Joe (aka Orbital), 31, got into using Bryce about five years ago. "From the start it became a pretty obsessive hobby." A window cleaner

became a pretty obsessive hobby." A window cleaner by day, he says: "It isn't the most exciting job in the world, so it's nice to be able to focus on doing something creative in my spare time." Joe modestly still considers himself a hobbyist, despite the quality of his work and having worked for AutoFX and DAZ. Mostly, he creates fantasy worlds. "I find this enjoyable as I can push my imagination as far as possible. I like to create scenes with atmosphere and perhaps a little bit of magic."

rLACES YOU'VE NEVER BEEN This is part of a series. "It's about a traveller who visits many strange and wonderful places."

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS "I've liways been fascinated by the sky," says Joe. "So I wanted to create an image where the sky captures the imagination."

AUTOMATED Modelled and rendered in Bryce 5, with slight colour adjustments in Photoshop, this image shows "a vision of an alien race dominated by technology."



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Dean Oyebo

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.paleshadows.co.uk
EMAIL: echodragonart@aol.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



(

"I didn't start taking my work seriously until about two years ago," says Dean, now 18. "Everyone said trying to use art as a career

trying to use art as a career was a waste of time." The internet persuaded him otherwise: "I saw so many successful artists that I was filled with a desire to prove those people wrong." He continued practising. "I fell in love with digital art and the stuff that could be created with it." Dean is largely self-taught and favours a mixture of pencil sketching and digital painting.

peparture at gate 17 A scene from Dean's Dead Hour story. This creation was motivated by Dean's desire to "do something with an awkward perspective."

pragon kin "I've always wanted to do a picture with a mage in it," explains Dean. "I wanted to go mad with spells and lighting effects and throw in a dragon connection if I could." The characters are from a race of people who each share their spirit with a dragon.

THE SECRET OF RUZ'ABARL This is another image from his Dead Hour story. "I've begun by simply drawing scenes, events and places in the story. This is what to the roces discover under a lake in the frozen continent of Ruz'abar."





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Roberto Lauro Goring LOCATION: UK WEB: www.briteshine.co.uk

SOFTWARE: Painter IX, Photoshop



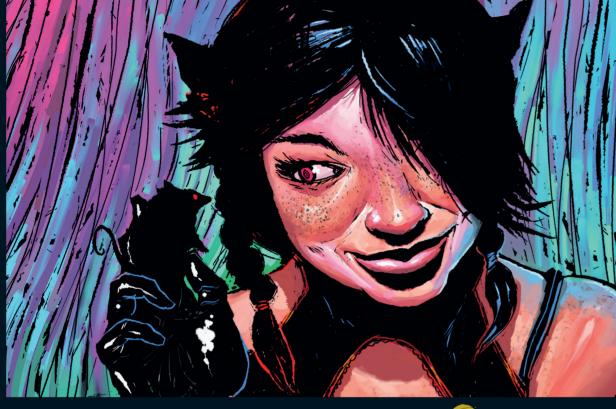
Roberto is currently studying a BA in graphic arts at Liverpool John

Moores University, as well as working as a freelance 2D and 3D digital illustrator. His choice of subject is meant to have an effect: "I love to pick up on odd concepts to get the viewer thinking about what's going on within my imagery." Although his images have their roots in reality, he adds: "I just love to exaggerate and stretch realism with psychedelic, stretch realism with psychedelic, vibrant colours and unusual, twisted characters." Roberto lists Phil Hale, Ashley Wood and Gez Fry among his influences. His list continues: "Bengal, Hyung Tae Kym, Yoji Skinkawa, Jon Foster and Adam Rex, to name a few!"

THELLO MISS KATTY "The time nonoured cat and mouse story."

MY LAST HOPE "A ghost of the woods, depicting the daunting aspects of life." A pencil sketch, painted with Photoshop CS.

THE MORNING MARCH "A fire hero and his cat." An ink sketch, painted with Painter IX and Photoshop CS.







April 2006 lmägineFX



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Mike Hill

LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.freefallgraphics.com EMAIL: Mike@freefallgraphics.com



"As a kid I always loved sci-fi" says Mike. "But I was never overly interested in art, despite taking it through school." So what changed all

that? "I got Halo on the Xbox during sixth form! I was instantly in love with its virtual worlds and the abundance of great designs that defined it." It was the start of something. "All I wanted to do was make something equally cool!" Next stop, Xbox central: "I discovered the craft of digital painting through the Halo promotional paintings, made by Craig Mullins, and I've been hooked ever since." Mike started Freefall Graphics with close friend, Tom Probert, while still in college. "It has yet to get me any work as a sci-fi illustrator, but it's a great platform for creative output." Mike is now focusing his attention on 3D. Look out, Mr Mullins.

THE HEAVY UNIT "I wanted to capture a moment with this painting," says Mike. "I spent a lot of time exploring designs and compositions in order to guide the eye across the most important elements."

NIGHTSTALKER "I put a lot of thought into getting a colour scheme that really gave the impression of moonlight flooding the scene," says Mike. The disorienting composition is intended to add to the tension.

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AN IMPROMPTU ESCAPE This piece was made as fan art after Mike first got hold of Halo 2. "it was inspired by action from the game but with a cinematic twist."



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LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.art-crime.co.uk
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SQFTWARE: Photoshop



"I've been drawing for as long as I can recall," says Umesh. "I've always seen it as a hobby, a way to unplug

from the chaos and disorder of life." He was hooked after entering his first comic book shop, at 18: "I submerged myself in fantasy art." The passion is stronger, 11 years on. "The most important thing for me as an artist is to be inspired and hopefully inspire others. Nothing beats that feeling."

ALTERED STATES This is a cover for a comic concept where nature takes human form. "And just as we've killed nature, they're going to kill us!"

HORNS, HALOS & HYBRIDS

"Ninety per cent of the time, when I draw a figure I'm working out a way to add some horns and a tail, or a set of wings," observes Umesh.

MOTH Concept for a comic based on the book and film, The Mothman Prophecies. "Good artwork is about having the right balance of light, colour and texture," says Umesh.





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SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300 DPI TIFF or JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO: FXPosé ImagineFX 30 Monmouth St Bath BA1 2BW

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS TATION AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY









SANTHARIAN DDFAM

An entire fantasy realm, created online in 1998, has grown into a huge web-based universe, thanks to input from a growing community of followers

Page 24



ZOOM SUIT

We talk to ex-Marvel man John Taddeo, as his film moves from screen to comic book series. Are more online comics on the way, thanks to portable media? Page 25



BEASTIES

A new training DVD from Gnomon enables you to learn creature building techniques such as designing scary beasts, from a professional Hollywood designer.

Page 26

Take the giant leap

In-depth Ever seen a commercial fantasy illustration in a book or online and thought: "I could do that – but better?" Then do it...

Going from amateur enthusiast to professional fantasy artist may not be as difficult as you think. It's the same whether you're working in concept art, pure illustration or other areas. Obviously you need raw talent to begin with, but what else can you do to turn your passion into paying work?

As discussed in last issue's story about promoting yourself, it really does pay to get noticed in an online community of artists first. Martin Bland, a concept artist from the UK (www.spyroteknik.com), agrees: "A lot of the large clients are very aware of the art communities, and regularly offer jobs or approach artists directly," he says. "If you're posting work of a high standard, regularly, on one of the large forums and soliciting feedback to others, you will be

66 If you post work of a high standard regularly... you will more than likely get work 99

noticed, and will more than likely get work because of it."

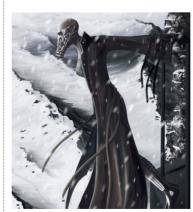
Hollywood concept artist George Hull (www.ghull.com) agrees to a point. "It's a catch-22 situation because when you haven't got any film experience, it often keeps you from getting any film work," he says. "Once you get into that world, you'll often be referred to the next job because

of it. So when you're outside of that cycle to begin with, anything can help, including online sites."

Martin is in no doubt as to the most important aspect of your work: "Quality wins every time. The other aspects are important, but if you can't produce high quality work you'll be overlooked."

George agrees: "If you've got a good idea but it's drawn poorly, it immediately puts people off. You can see it with a lot of young art: when the drawing itself is poor, you tend to glaze over it, even if the idea is brilliant."

Varying your subject matter can also improve your appeal, particularly if you aim to create genuinely original images instead of re-treading existing ground. "There are an awful lot of portfolios with work similar to Star Wars, for instance, just because it's been in the media for so



Martin Bland regularly posts artwork, such as this image, on large internet forums. He says it's crucial for getting work offers.

GEORGE

HULL

Tips from the top on how to go professional, from a leading movie concept artist and illustrator...

What's the most important tip for going pro?

It's 50/50 between the ideas and the aesthetic. The person who has a portfolio full of ideas and designs that are different from the films we've already seen will get noticed the most. So just really push yourself. Ask yourself if there's anything in your portfolio that looks really derivative.

Anything else?

The other important things are technique, craft and the artistic skill behind a drawing – the ability to present a line drawing that looks like a nice delineated line drawing. Your painting skills, drawing skills... things that are separate from the idea

Do you think that online communities are helpful?

They can't hurt. The people who are hiring in my industry probably don't look at these sites, but someone underneath them might be.

Any other advice you can pass on to our readers?

In retrospect, what I would have definitely done earlier in my career is to focus on the quality. Whatever you're drawing, machinery, environments or whatever, go back and do a second pass. Keep going back and tightening it up.



George is a film concept illustrator and visual effects artist who has worked on many movies.

www.ghull.com

Illustration by Dave Curd, www.davecurd.com

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ImagineNation News

>>> Continued from previous page...



"Direct the style of your work to the right publishers," advises Martin Bland.

long," George points out.
Once you've built up a
reasonable body of work that
you're satisfied with, you could
also try approaching publishers
directly. "Four or five carefullychosen images might just excite
someone into responding," points
out Martin. "Direct the style of
work to the right publishers.
Research what they produce and
try to pre-empt what they'll
expect. RPG publishers will want a
certain type of art, for instance,
whereas studios will want a

It can be tempting to work for free – or essentially free – when you're first starting out, but most professionals warn against this, as it tends to devalue your work. "And make sure you look after your image rights," adds Martin, particularly if you're entering competitions for exposure.

broader range of skills.

Even if you seem to be getting nowhere despite all your best efforts, don't despair - if you're dedicated and talented enough, it will happen eventually. "It's been more of a slow crawl than a leap for me," stresses Martin. "I've been fortunate enough to be able to set my own hours. I haven't done much pushing to be honest. I just let things happen naturally. I waited for the offers and concentrated on painting..."





Web realms

The Santharian Dream An alternate universe on the internet just keeps getting bigger...

A fully-fledged fantasy world is growing organically on the web. The Santharian Dream is a communitybased, non-profit project for anyone interested in fantasy: artists, writers, role-playing gamers or musicians.

Santharia is an entire alternate universe imbued with the same sort of detail as Middle-Earth (JRR Tolkien is a big influence). It includes history, legends and lore, geography, creatures, flora and languages. The project began as a backdrop for a role-playing campaign. Now it hosts its own email RPG game, with plans for a computer version.

Much of Santharia has already been created, but there's always more to do.

New artists who can create images of its people, places and items are always welcomed. The Santharian

style is distinct, so there are strict guidelines.

"The Santharian Dream has established, and tries to maintain, a very high standard regarding the

integration of artwork," says creator and Webmaster Artimidor (aka Christian Strobl, from Austria). "New additions need to meet these high standards. If you think that your artwork fits to the Dream, let us know and we will evaluate it." Among the current contributors are Linda Bergkvist. www.santharia.com.

This month lmagineFX likes...

Marta Dahlig – another masterpiece by our favourite Pole See page 78

Scientific surveys – as conducted by you guys... See page 29

Jim Burns – from pilot to world-renowned sci-fi artist. See page 52

Ninja Scroll – blood and gore in this amazing Anime DVD See page 113

extremely talented cover artist ...



Manga props come with the new Poser bundle.

Taking the Miki

Bargain Poser bundle includes high-res manga figure

The Poser 6 Collector's Edition Volume 1, from efrontier, bundles a whole wodge of useful applications and content into one huge package. Apart from including Poser 6 itself, the new release features the 3D rendering and modelling program, Shade 7 designer LE.

The Miki CE Figure Pack is also included. Miki is a 112,000-polygon

model of a young Asian character. It includes plenty of props such as Japanese street signs, a scooter and clothing items.

The whole collection costs USD \$279.99, which is just USD \$30 more than the standard price for Poser 6, so it's a bit of a bargain. Check out the website for more details.

www.e-frontier.com





Zoom Suit

Comics From film to book series – with an added technological twist...

Chances are you're one of the 200,000 people who have seen Zoom Suit, the short animated film in the style of a comic book.



Created and written by John Taddeo, a former Marvel entertainment brand manager, it's been a massive hit around

the web. Now it's being released as a four-issue comic series.

The first version of Zoom Suit was written 25 years ago when John was 12, and was inspired by the cover of Iron Man #118, by Bob Layton: "The one where Tony Stark is falling to his death reaching for the Iron Man suit," says John. "I hoped he would die – I wanted someone else in that suit. Okay, I wanted the suit."

Zoom Suit the comic, now radically altered from that original story, is drawn by Billy Dallas Patton of Unlimited X-Men fame. It has an all-star cast of cover artists including Billy Tucci, Bart Sears and even Bob Layton, who created that original Iron Man cover. "The artwork is sometimes drawn in traditional 2D fashion and sometimes we illustrate using a Wacom tablet," says John.

John found a process that would make the Zoom Suit appear out of this world, thanks to MetalFX. This proprietary British printing technology enables millions of metallic colours to be achieved by adding silver to the normal inks, making the suit look truly metallic, (you'll see it soon on the cover of ImagineFX).

But John cautions "Technology should be used in a manner that suits the subject matter. When I see metallic foil on Wolverine's claws I think, 'Cool!' Metal on Spider-Man is sort of... stupid. Technology has advanced to the point where, if you really want to make a comic or film, there is no excuse not to. You won't have much life other than your job and your art, but it's possible."

And what about online comics or other digital media? John is sure they're going to be huge, as portable media becomes more accessible. "There's a gaping black hole with an appetite for quality content right now. It's a great time to be an indie creator," he enthuses.

Zoom Suit issue 1, at 36 pages, is due out on April 26 for USD \$2.95. Numbers are strictly limited.

www.superverse.com

66 If you really want to make a comic or film, there is no excuse not to 99

changing the face of 3D



Maya® 7, the latest release of the award-winning 3D software, is packed with innovative new features allowing you to realise your creative vision faster and more easily than ever before.

Capitalising on Alias MotionBuilder® technology, Maya 7 makes character animation easier and more accurate. Other improvements such as advanced render layering and new modelling, texturing and effects tools help you achieve more with Maya.

To find out how the new and innovative features of Maya are changing the face of 3D, visit www.alias.com/maya7.



OAlias www.alias.com

Image created by Meats Meier (www.3dartspace.com)

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ImagineNation News

HOLOGRAPHIC THINKING

Too many artists rely on a set of 2D routines for drawing figures...

By Todd Lockwood

Many artists fail to see their subjects holographically. Objects have fullness and depth beyond two dimensions. Try to see all the way through the object, to the backside. Construct your objects and figures from the inside out. See the perspectives, feel the volumes.

Your work should be far more than just parallel lines converging somewhere. Understand why things look the way they do. Draw your local environment. If that's mundane, add a dragon. Concentrate on all those parallel lines, convergences and foreshortening, but feel the weight of the buildings, and construct a 3D model in your head of the spaces.

Take note of something that even many professional illustrators don't get: there are no straight lines in the real world. Your perspective, the nature of You being a single point in a vast universe, causes every theoretically straight line to be bent. Think 'fish-eye'.

If you concentrate on peripheral skewing as you walk through the rooms in your home or drive around corners in your car, you might even feel your brain bending in response...

The universe has volume – breadth and depth. Learning to see and feel that is essential. Holographic thinking can transform the way you view your art.





"Want to comment on what I've said? Write in and tell me by sending an email to todd@imaginefx.com"

www.toddlockwood.com

Beastly behaviour

ZBrush Learn creature-building techniques from a film pro...

Hollywood designer Aaron Sims has released a new training DVD through The Gnomon Workshop. Taking inspiration from his personal Tethered Islands project, Building Creatures Using ZBrush tells you how to do just that.

Aaron first creates the creature's topology using ZSpheres, then goes



on to show how to skin it and add details such as alpha textures and colour. Finally, for more advanced artists, the model is taken into

Softimage XSI where it's rigged, ready to be animated in 3D.

Aaron has designed and animated creatures for many films, including Men in Black, A. I. Artificial Intelligence, War of the Worlds and Fantastic Four. He's currently working on Life Lines, the first project in his epic Tethered Islands

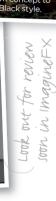
series, which he hopes will eventually become a feature film, comic book series and other tie-ins.

The DVD promises five and a half hours of training and costs USD \$59.

www.thegnomonworkshop.com, www.aaron-sims.com







SPECIAL TOURION PSINIS Linda Bergkuist

Bergkvist's latest

Poster prints More fine art from Ballistic Publishing

Ballistic Publishing continues its prolific output of work from leading fantasy artists with a new poster book series. Ballistic Masters kicks off with a collection of 12 poster prints by Linda Bergkvist, one of the genre's stars.

Each of the images is printed at A3 size on 190gsm paper stock, having first been colour-corrected. Press checking and packaging are also done individually, with a gold-embossed folio presenting details of the artist and prints.

The Bergkvist collection mainly includes images inspired by fairy tales and other dreamlike

sources, although they usually have a subtle hint of darkness.

"I love the visual element of fairytales," says Linda. "Things that are fantastic and unnatural and not quite real fascinate me, no end."

More Ballistic Masters collections will follow. The Bergkvist collection costs USD \$29.95.

www.ballisticpublishing.com



Reviewed soon!

A fairytale flavour percolates through Linda

Bergkvist's collection, the first in Ballistic's series of poster prints by fantasy artists.









Scenes from Blue Light, Andy lepworth's work in progress – a mixture of digital and traditional media.

Old or new?

Trusty brushes Moving to digital? There's no need to ditch your old media entirely...

If you've grown up using a computer, it's probably second nature to work digitally. But



what if you're more used to traditional media, yet still want to explore digital techniques? There's room for both,

insists illustrator Andy Hepworth.

"I've been kept busy so far this year by White Wolf, mostly working on its Exalted pen and

paper RPG, which is great fun," says Andy. Like many a pro, he finds it's important to keep personal projects on the go. His is Blue Light: "Destined to be a short comic, probably 15 pages of cyberpunky action."

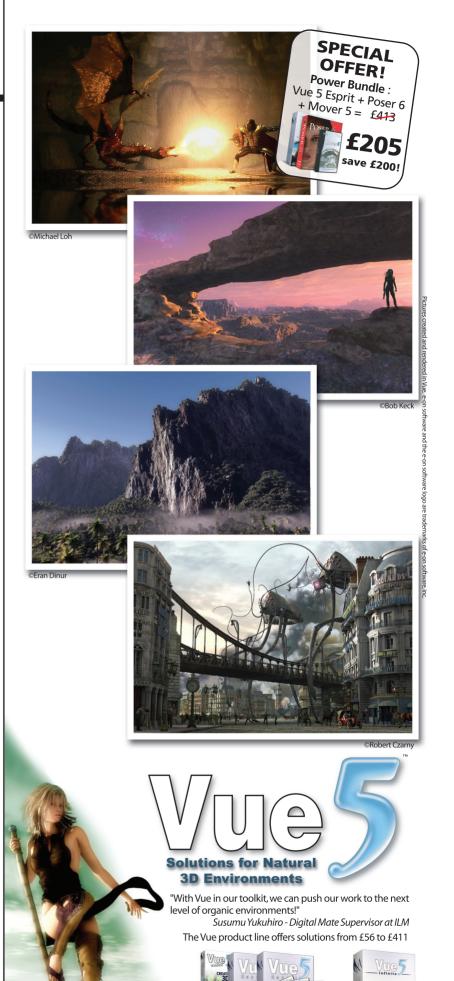
"I've struggled with digital media," he admits. "So I've been searching for a way to keep as much traditional input into monochrome work as possible." He accepts the value of being able to see a whole drawing on paper, without needing to zoom or scroll.

"But pencil has its own limitations as well. That's where the digital aspect comes into its own - lighting effects, distorted text, textures, various simulated brushes. Essentially, once the pencil image is scanned, I use a toned layer on top, set

to Multiply, which I then erase out to get highlights. Sometimes I'll have a few layers on top with textures, lighting effects, signage, etc."

The results blends the best of what traditional and digital media can offer. See Andy's work at www. andyhepworth.com

66 I confess to being someone who has struggled with digital media 99



For more information www.e-onsoftware.com/ifi



ImagineNation News

Painter and PD Pro

Software expanded Significant updates for two favourite painting packages...

Two of the best painting packages, Corel Painter and PD Pro, have been updated. The awkwardlynamed Painter IX.5 features a whole raft of bug fixes and additions, such as Photo Painting Palettes. You can create paintings from photographs automatically much like some of Photoshop's filters - by using Underpainting, **Auto-Painting and Restoration** palettes to apply random, handpainted strokes.

Painter IX.5 now also sports its own dedicated Eraser tool which will remove any medium, plus a new Rubber Stamp Tool that functions just like those in similar packages and enables you to easily clone from point to point.

Although Painter doesn't yet support Intel-based Macs natively, Corel says version IX.5 is fully compatible with Apple's Rosetta translation technology, so the program should run flawlessly on the new Macs.

Meanwhile, PD Pro 3.6 (previously known as Project Dogwaffle) is being called 'the productivity release,' with many new features

automate path generation and render new brushes, for instance.

There are painting improvements too, such as the Oilify and GraphicPen filters, designed for



turning photos into sketches. Dual monitors are now fully supported, and the image browser has been optimised.

"My favourite add-on so far is the PennyPaint, together with a Wacom graphic tablet, which is the most responsive pen simulation I have ever used," says freelance artist, Oliver Brupbacher.

Both updates are available now from www.corel.com and www. squirreldome.com









Painter

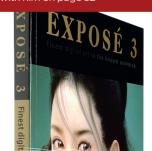
URL: www.ballisticpublishing.com Just hit our desks as we went to press. An amazing showcase not to be missed. Look out for our in-depth review, coming in issue four of ImagineFX...



Imago

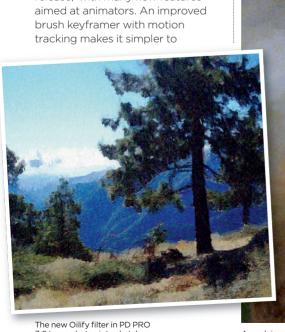
URL: www.titanbooks.co.uk

A sublime showcase of the work of Jim Burns - one of the world's most sought-after sci-fi artists. Read our exclusive interview with him on page 52



Exposé 4

URL: www.ballisticpublishing.com Yes, we know it's not out yet, but one look at the submissions page on Ballistic's website assures us you're in for a treat Look out for the review soon



A work in progress, created by Don Seegmiller, with PD Pro 3.6.



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Reader letters

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Carney on rob@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

Giving it all away?

Thanks a lot for giving away the method I developed nearly 15 years ago for producing starfields! [see page 36 – issue two | Okay, I'm only semi-serious, but this does raise a serious issue. Since the beginning of time, many artists have guarded their secrets jealously - and why wouldn't they, since they make their living through art? If another artist asks me how I do this, I usually tell him/ her (and as European Vice President of the International Association of Astronomical Artists I believe I have a reputation for helping other artists); but that's not the same as seeing it given away to thousands of readers.

As a wider issue, don't you think that giving away all the information is likely to stunt the creativity of young artists, who no longer need to use their brains to work out techniques for themselves? **David A Hardy, via email** www.astroart.org

Rob replies: Your letter raises an interesting point, David. But is there really a difference between you sharing your techniques with individuals and us sharing on a one-to-one basis with our readers? With our Q&A and workshop pages I don't think we're stunting the creativity of young artists - in fact I think we're doing the opposite, acting as a catalyst for creative ideas and new experimentation. The premise is that artists take these snippets of advice as a basis for developing their ideas, technique and artwork. Everybody has to start somewhere, and it's surely how an artist develops his or her own style that counts (and where the real creativity comes into play). What does everyone else think? Are we stifling creativity, or inspiring fresh talent? Let me know at the usual address...





DID YOU MISS ISSUE TWO?

See page 87 for details on how you can get your hands on it.

- Subscribe and get 40% off!



Foss: A legend

Wow! I must say, I never knew that Chris Foss (Legend, issue two page 54) illustrated The Joy of Sex! I've always loved his book covers, but this adds a whole new 'dimension' to his talents. John Hungerford, via email

Rob replies: Indeed it does, John. We're intrigued to see what Chris' next projects involve, as apparently he's trying to combine his love of erotic and sci-fi art! And look out for insightful interviews with legendary artists every issue – starting with Jim Burns, on page 54.

Excellent suggestions...

I have only ever subscribed to one magazine in my whole 52 years of life and yours is it. I love the work produced by the artists in it, and will send some of mine in when I find time.

How about a closer look at graphics cards and monitors? When I started, I didn't have a clue what to buy. Another suggestion I have for you is to provide binders – I have a feeling that these mags will become collector items.

Patrick Noone, via email

Rob replies: Excellent ideas, Patrick. I especially like the idea of binders and I'll be looking into it immediately. What do others think, are binders a good way to archive copies of the magazine?

Light to his darkness

I have just read Todd Lockwood's article on fantasy art genre in issue one. This has been an encouragement that I've longed to hear. As an art student who enjoys dreaming up bizarre creations, I have come under fire from my tutors. They tell me that fantasy art is not highly regarded or original.

My tutors say that the style of fantasy art never develops and that the people who do it lock themselves in their room copying other fantasy artists before them. I couldn't disagree more. Thank you for the inspiring article. It is light to my darkness, to remind myself that people still care and to continue what I have set out to achieve.

Benjamin Ho, via email

Rob replies: Thanks for taking the time to write in, Benjamin. I think your tutors' view of fantasy art echoes that of the majority of colleges around the country, if not the world. Write in and prove me wrong, tutors!



See www.corel.com for more info

In the name of science

What's with all the semi-naked chicks? I know fantasy art is littered with them in the slow world but digitally speaking I wasn't sure that artists were painting them so often. So, I did a 'highly scientific' survey on DeviantArt.com to see what the first 50 subjects are when I browsed. The results are as follows:

- 18 mythic animals mainly dragons and fursonas
- 10 gorgeous men in fantasy settings
- 12 semi-naked chicks
- 1 half bloke half animal
- 4 half woman half animal
- 5 others I couldn't categorise so easily (old women, 'things', plants)

know how to paint these things

 1 group of assorted men and women, pointy-eared or not.
 Right, so there were a few more semi-naked chicks than I thought.
 Please could you include more dragons, fursonae, mythical beasts, drop-dead gorgeous men and general strangeness to balance it out? People will want to

Also, I very much like how you are commissioning artists and tutorials from the enthusiasts on the web as well as the pros – you've made some people very happy out there to be getting some recognition for their talent. Elizabeth Watford, via email.

Rob replies: Thanks for conducting this 'highly scientific' experiment for us, Elizabeth. Over the next few months we have a vast range of diverse content planned, and you'll be pleased to know this includes workshops on painting dragons (a popular request), mythical beasts and space and sci-fi art. What do other readers think? Tell me by emailing me at the address above.





8/3/06 5:10:21 pm





ImagineNation Events

Events

FANTASY & SCI-FI **ART SHOWS AROUND** THE WORLD

JACON, US

URL: www.jacon.org

Celebrating its seventh year of bringing Japanese animation to Florida, this anime convention features a host of activities, dealers, an art show and special guests. At the Sheraton World Resort in Orlando Florida, call +1 407-

STARFEST. US

URL: http://starland.com/sf-sc/sf06/index.html All things sci-fi catered for here. Featuring the George Takei from Star Trek and Dirk Benedict from Battlestar Galactica, just in case you get bored with the huge amount of art available at the art show. Marriott Denver Tech Center, Denver, Colorado.

ELEPRECON, US

DATE: 5-7 May
URL: www.leprecon.org/lep32 This year's theme is The Dragon Lords of

Tombstone, a heady mix of sci-fi, westerns and dragons, no less. Get down to the Comfort Inn in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Call +1 423 893 7979. Note: side-arms will be piece-bonded by the town marshall, so watch it.

ECALIFUR, US

DATE: 5-7 May

URL: www.califur.com

A convention especially designed for 'furs' and if you need that explained more, this probably isn't the convention for you. Plenty of animal-related antics here, with one of the artist guests of honour being Mitch de la Guardia. There's also a thriving art show. Holiday Inn, Costa Mesa, California.

MOBICON, US

DATE: 19-21 May

URL: www.mobicon.org

Absolutely everything is featured at Mobicon: fantasy, science fiction, horror, comic books, anime and gaming (well, almost everything). Revel in the company of artist guest of honour Ellisa Mitchell, famed for her RPG game artwork, and then peruse the obligatory art show. Ashbury Hotel & Suites, Mobile, Alabama - +1 251 344 8030.

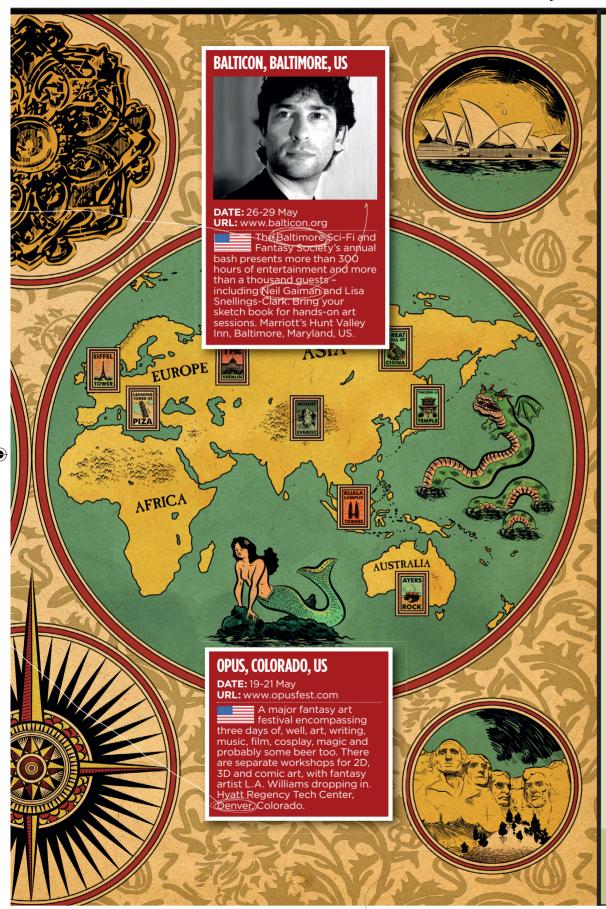
IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: ROB@IMAGINEFX.COM







The fantasy art world calendar...



Last year I went to...

'TRI23' REPORTS BACK FROM ANIMAZEMENT 2005, DEDICATED TO ALL THINGS MANGA AND ANIME

On the final day of last year's Animazement, I was sad to see it end. The con is like summer camp for big kids. It's a weekend of hanging out with friends, making new ones, and overdosing on everything anime/manga related. Last year I helped run the convention, so most of the time I was trying to get everything running smoothly.

The big new event this year was Eva! The Musical presented by Carolina Otaku Uprising (a Japanese animation club). They played to a packed audience and at the end of the performance everybody was asking: "Will this be on the Cosplay DVD?" Our response was we couldn't include it on the Cosplay DVD because of copyright laws. The truth of the matter is we forgot to record the audio...

Everything that wasn't technical was bigger and better. The videogame room was moved into a larger area reducing fanboy funk by 80 per cent, a whole new lineup of Japanese guests came, and best of all, a new seating system prevented the three hour line for cosplay.

Animazement has always been one of my favourite cons. Everywhere you turn you'll see someone in cosplay. The convention is big enough that there's always something to do, but small enough that you don't feel lost in the crowd. The best part of Animazement is all the people you meet, and it's all those cool people that make me come back every year. tri23.dyndns.org



Scenes from the art show at last year's Animazement, with a good time evidently being had by all.



Tri23, aka Fred Johnson, describes himself as "Cyrano de Bergerac... without the charm," and has a passion for graphic design and taking pictures at cons.

See more at tri23.dyndns.org

Map by Dave Curd, www.davecurd.com



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ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Artist OSA

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? EMAIL HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM



SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS: SEE PAGE 41 FOR DETAILS

John Kearney



UK-based John has worked as a 2D and 3D graphic artist for the last seven years, mostly in the video games industry.

www.j-k.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Don Seegmiller



Don wears many hats including traditional artist digital artist, teacher and art director. He lives in Utah. US.

www.seegmillerart.com

Henning Ludvigsen



Henning has 12 years illustration, design and digital art experience. He is art director for a game developer in Greece.

www.henning ludvig sen.com

Tim Warnock



Tim works as a matte painter and concept artist for film and TV. He currently works for Invisible Pictures.

www.invisiblepictures.ca

Frazer Irving



Award-winning UK illustrator Frazer has worked for DC Comics, Pepsi, 2000AD, Marvel Enterprises and Hasbro.

www.frazerirving.com

Adam Benton



A freelance illustrator for high-profile clients in advertising, publishing, science and medicine. His love is sci-fi art.

www.kromekat.com

Joanna Zhou



A student at Chelsea College of Art & Design, award-winning freelance manga artist and a part of Sweatdrop Studios.

www.chocolatepixels.com



When trying to think of how to create a monster or alien, try to draw from as many different sources as possible. Your creature can be an amalgamation of many different things and, with a bit of practice, you'll be able to mix and match these ideas into your own unique monster

Question

I have trouble designing monsters and aliens. Where can I find inspiration and improve my creative workflow? Dan Pavey, UK

Answer John replies



Reference is essential. I keep my eyes peeled for interesting material to feed my imagination. I

often inspect photographs of insects, crustaceans, lizards, amphibians and anything else that might provide inspiration for my characters. I urge you to explore the wonderful textures, shapes, and colour combinations easily found in nature. Take some time to study various anatomies so

you can use that knowledge as guidance when trying to design and paint convincing creatures.

You'll often find that the most impressive designs have natural harmony and balance which can be difficult to achieve. Think carefully about size and weight relationships: is a tail needed to make the creature look like it could stand without falling over? With enough practice you'll be able to exploit your creative intuition and learn how to mix and

match ideas in order to obtain concepts you find naturally pleasing.

Once your creative juices are flowing, be sure to record them by sketching thumbnail-sized images, digitally or traditionally. Thumbnails are good personal mental notes, which can be referred to when time is short or ideas are scarce. Gradually you'll build a library that becomes indispensable to you because conceptual ideas are essential to any sci-fi or fantasy-based visual project.



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Your questions answered...

Step-by-step: From inspiration to fully-fledged monster.



I choose a thumbnail that offers potential and make a larger sketch, which I scan. There are lots of natural influences in the design: crustaceans, bird beaks, octopus tentacles and many other things that I've accumulated in my head.



I set the scanned layer to Multiply and using soft-edged and Dry Media brushes, I loosely block in some colours on a new layer below it. Colour accuracy isn't important yet because I just want to create an under painting with good tonal values.



begin to paint in flecks of my chosen colours: hues of orange, peach and pink for the skin, with complementary colours scattered around to add vibrancy.

Question

How can I make custom brushes without having to create them from images that I've drawn? I don't always feel that creative... Aneko Itou, Japan

Answer Don replies



There seem to be as many different ways to make custom brushes as there are artists using

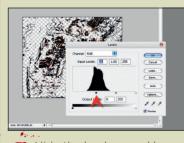
them. One of my favourite methods is to use photos as the basis for a custom brush. You can make a seemingly infinite number of brushes from any photograph. It is best to use ones that have a good contrast range. The concept of creating a custom brush from a photograph will be similar in most digital painting programs but the actual method will vary. I use Photoshop CS2 in this case.



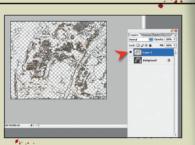
To explain this, I've used a photo of a rock. The subject matter isn't important as long as the photo has fairly good contrast.



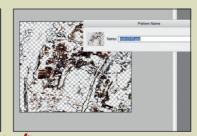
1 scale my chosen photo to 300 pixels wide. Using the Magic Wand tool, I select a part of the image. The default settings for Magic Wand are fine.



Hide the background layer before defining your new brush. I select Image Adjustments>Levels and bring up the black slider to make the overall image much darker.



You can see the active selection. I use the PC shortcut key Ctrl+J. This copies the selected portion of the photograph into a new layer.



In Edit>Define Brush I save my new brush. I go to the Brushes menu and customise more settings. I add Angle Jitter and increase spacing between the dabs as a starting point.

Artist's secret

CREATING A BRUSH FROM A PICTURE Creating a basic brush from a picture in Photoshop CS2 is easy. A further step gives more control with the new brush. The edges of this new brush are hard, but I prefer them to fade out gradually. This is easy to achieve. With my image open and my new brush layer created, I make a circular selection on this layer. The image below shows the red circle where I make the selection.

I feather the selection at 25 pixels. You will need to experiment with feathering on each new brush. Using the PC shortcut Ctrl+), or Command+) on the Mac, I copy the selection onto another layer. My image now fades from the centre to transparent at the edges. I define the brush, as before. The softer edges provide greater control.

Don seegmiller, digital artist



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ImagineNation Artist Q&A

I decide to create an easy but effective background using various Photoshop functions. It's important to have the figure on a separate layer because I will be inserting elements above and below that to create a sense of depth



Question

I spent ages working on a manga character and now I'm just too tired to draw a background! What can I do to complete the picture?

Oliver Adler, Germany

Answer Joanna replies

Since manga illustrations tend to have a two-dimensional quality, they can benefit from a pared-down background. If your character design is complex and quite large, then a simple backdrop can be crucial to an image's success. Of

course, it may be that you're just too lazy to draw a background after wrist-breaking work colouring in the character! In this example, I've drawn a stand-alone character using Painter and Photoshop.



I give everything a gradient fill using appropriate colours. I make some bubbles on a new layer with the circle tool (pressing Shift). I apply a Radial Zoom Blur on the bubbles and reduce the layer opacity so they blend in. Then I create some circles and rings, made by deleting the centre of a circle with a smaller concentric selection. For these, I apply a Gaussian Blur, then reduce the opacity. I place these randomly (above and below my character) until I like the effect. I also apply two Computones filters. Sometimes we're stuck seeing screentone as always being black, but tone designs can be extremely effective when applied in white or other colours.



Question

I want to paint hair using Photoshop, but I'm finding it difficult and time consuming. Are there any brushes that make the task easier?

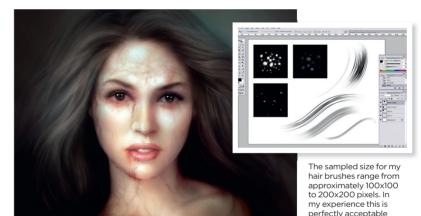
Karl Hewitt, UK

Answer John replies



My favourite technique for painting hair involves the creation of a few custom brushes. I'm assuming you

know the basic brush creation process (if not see page 37 of issue 2), so open a new document and draw several random dots in close proximity. The idea is for each dot to act as a clump of hair strands. I suggest you experiment • with a variety of soft and hard-edged • dots. After creating your brush, you need to define appropriate settings. The single most important setting is Brush Spacing, which I set to 1 or 2 per cent for a continuous line. Next, make sure that Smoothing is active so your strokes are interpolated fluidly, then use Pen Pressure Opacity for maximum control.



Here are the hair brushes in action. I think they are most effective when used to enhance areas that have been blocked in with standard brushes

Ouestion Do you have any tips on how to paint dragon or serpent scales? Graham Hockaday, UK

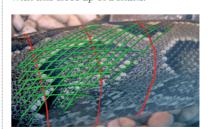
Answer Henning replies



Creatures with scales usually have round shapes and these can complicate the process of creating

specific patterns that follow a shape. I suggest you try to make a complete 3D pattern of carefully-placed guide lines in the shape you want to cover with scales.

Getting the perspective and shape right is one thing, but it's quite another to make sure the scales don't look flat and painted onto a smooth shape. If you want a real-life look, there are two choices for snakes: smooth scales, with a surface that reflects the light; or keeled scales, which have a duller surface. You can also create attractive patterns by colouring separate scales, as shown with this close up of a snake.



Capture the cylindrical shape of the creature by wrapping a 45-degree grid around the shape. If you study pictures of reptiles, you will see the scales are usually placed in a grid like this.

Your questions answered...

I love painting weathered things. The older and more beat up something looks the more I want to paint it. One of the things I find tedious is painting small pits and depressions in an objects surface. Can you recommend any way of speeding up the process?



Izzy Seymour, France

Answer Don replies



Painting small pits and depressions can indeed become tedious as you try and indicate some

dimension by adding highlights and such. While there's not any way to get rid of all the work, you can speed up the process. I will show you a relatively easy and quick way to indicate multiple small pits and depressions in a painted surface in Painter.

I create myself a new image and fill it with a mid value colour. Of course, if you're working on your own painting you'll already have something to work with. Here I'm only showing the procedure.

I create a new layer on top of my background and using a darker colour with the Variable Splatter and Tiny Spattery Airbrush (both default airbrushes) I paint a number of small pits (see image 1) As you might imagine, going in and highlighting individual pits to give them dimension is a tedious







Image 1: Paint a number of small pits using the Variable Splatter and Tiny Splatter Airbrush, then duplicate the layer. Image 2: Go to the Brightness and Contrast slider and lighten the bottom pitted layer. Image 3: Place the lighter layer down and to one side of the darker layer.

job. Fortunately there's a quick way to accomplish the same thing.

Now I duplicate my pit layer. I do this either by using the Copy/ Paste commands or using the Duplicate Layer command found by right clicking on the active layer. I hide the top pitted layer.

I use the Brightness and Contrast slider (see image 2) found under the Effects/Tonal Control menu to lighten the bottom pitted layer. I'm careful to not make the lighter pits

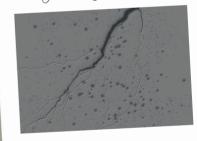
too much brighter than the background layer. I unhide the top pitted layer. With the light pitted layer active and using the arrow keys, I relocate the lighter layer slightly down and to one side of the darker layer (see image 3). This movement must coincide with my paintings light direction. I now have many small pits with a real look and feel. Now you know how to add a pitted appearance to any surface in your painting.

Artist's secret

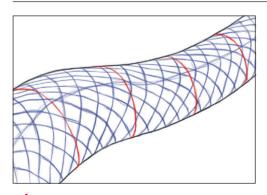
WEATHERED EFFECTS

I also use this technique to add other weathered effects to my images. A good example is a crack. In this case I draw or create a crack shape going across my painting. Using the same technique, I duplicate the crack, adjust the brightness of the bottom crack layer, and then slightly offset it in the same manner and direction as the pits. As you can see it creates a quite convincing surface crack. Again, practice will make perfect as you use this technique more and more.

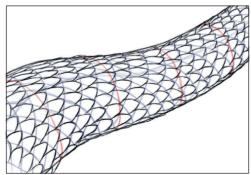
Don seegmiller, Digital artist



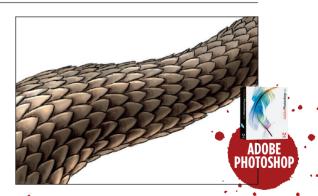
Step-by-step: Creating scales in Photoshop.



Draw lines on top of your outline drawing. It's a good idea to keep these on a separate layer. Divide the shape into evenly-placed circles (red lines). Think about how things look in 3D. Add the 45-degree grid between the dividers (blue lines).



Set the line layers to 50 per cent opacity and draw every single scale (at any shape) in a new layer on top. The tip of the scales should point backwards from the direction the creature is facing. Overlap the scale behind each one, just like roof tiles.



. Hide the guide lines, make a new layer Hide the guide in es, mand a underneath the existing ones and paint in a base colour. Add some shadow at the base of each scale, so that it looks as if the overlapping one is casting some shadow. At the end, add shape, shadow and highlights.

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ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question

How do I use channels to make a selection when combining photographs for a digital matte painting?

David Steunou, France

Answer Tim Warnock replies



Channels can be useful for situations where you need to make a complex extraction of elements such as trees from a sky or any other item that would

be tedious to mask out by hand. A channel is like a layer but serves a different purpose than layers do. An RGB image has three channels in it, one for each colour that makes up the image. Channels are also where alpha information is stored.

To separate my sky from the trees and ground I create an alpha channel from a duplicate of one of my colour channels. It's from this alpha that I'm going to create a selection. Photoshop enables you to create selections of any of the channels but we want to create one that isolates the sky. First I analyze my colour channels to see which one has the most contrast between the sky and the rest of the image. To do this, I simply click on each individual channel in the Channels palette. Because skies typically have a lot of blue in them the blue channel is usually a good choice. I duplicate the channel by clicking and dragging it on top of the Create New Channel icon at the bottom of the Channels palette. With the duplicate channel selected I use Curves (Ctrl+M on PC and Command+M on a Mac) to adjust the sky so it is pure white and I try to get everything else to be pure black. Often there's a bit of cleaning up to do. That can be taken care of with a paint brush or by using the Lasso tool to select areas to be filled in.

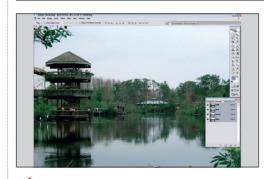
Once my channel is isolating the sky, I make a selection from the channel by clicking on it while holding down Ctrl on a PC or Command on a Mac. I make a duplicate of my layer and press Delete to cut out the sky. Now the new sky can be laid underneath and colour corrected to fit the scene.



If there are any remaining edges left over on your new picture, you can clean this up by using a soft edge eraser.



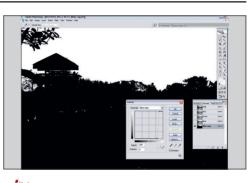
Step-by-step: Working with channels in Photoshop



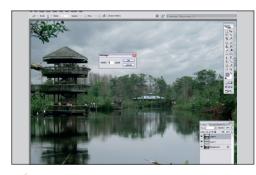
When looking at the channels, you want to find the one with the most contrast between the sky and the horizon. It doesn't matter what the rest of the image looks like. What is important is that there is a definite edge to cut the sky out from.



There's usually some cleaning up to do. With the Polygonal Lasso tool I select the area that needs fixing and fill it in with black (Alt+Delete on a PC, Option+Delete on a Mac). Remaining specs can be cleaned up using Filter>Noise> Dust & Scratches.



• On the duplicate channel I boost the contrast with Curves. I like to use the eyedroppers in the bottom right of the dialog box to define the lightest and darkest points. The idea is to get high contrast without obliterating fine details like leaves.



After deleting the old sky from my duplicate layer I use Layer>Matting> Defringe to get rid of any visible edges left. The new sky can now be placed under the matted foreground and colour corrected accordingly to fit the scene.





Your questions answered...

Question

In the tree lab in Bryce 5.5, I find I need to do a lot of work each time to get a full looking tree. Can I buy presets? Paul Parks, US

Answer Adam Benton replies



You can, but you may not need to actually buy any, since there are quite a few already there in Bryce -

although it's not obvious. When you go to the Create palette, to create a new tree, hold down either Alt (Mac), or Option (PC) and click on the tree icon. You'll be presented with a load dialog window, from which you can select lots of tree presets. There's a good range here, and many with fuller, dense foliage.

Remember also, that you can save the trees you spent so long creating. With your tree selected, click on the down arrow next to Create, and click Add to store your tree in the library.



With a little delving into Bryce, you'll find a forest

Ouestion

Intricate eyes seem to be the absolute trademark of manga style. How do I get them right? Roberto Marotta, Italy

Answer **Joanna** replies



The very basic manga eye has a dark pupil, a large light reflection in the upper corner and a tonal gradation from

top to bottom. However there are countless ways to draw eyes by combining and changing elements such as pupil size, eye shape, colour and shading. It's within these parameters that an artist can establish their own style, as well as creating realistic and varied characters.

Having a huge, often 'colourless' pupil results in a placid and kind expression, suitable for shoujo-style illustrations. Accentuating the irises creates an intense gaze which complements complex characters or stories.



Eyes are the window to someone's soul, and being able to give different characters a wide variety of eye styles is a crucial skill in becoming a successful When colouring in an eye, I usually fill everything in with a light shade first. Then I apply darker tones around the edges to give the pupil a three-dimensional look.

See the large light reflection in the upper

right corner of each eye? That's just one hallmark of a manga eye. Play around with styles to create your own look

> I try to vary the shades slightly for a slight iridescent sparkle. This example is done in Painter IX, but the rules apply for any software or media. After colouring I make a layer on top of the eye outlines and drop in opaque white reflections. Adding a bit of grey shading to the top of the eyeball enhances the illusion of roundness. You can take it even further and colour in the black outlines to create more effects.

It's worth putting some time aside to just start experimenting with styles to find your 'signature' eye. Once you have a design you're happy with, challenge yourself to draw different variations, as shown on

Question

I often need to draw straight lines. I'm not good at doing it by hand. Is there an easy way to draw them in Painter? Ian Bull, UK

Answer Don replies



It's very easy to draw straight lines in Painter with any brush and at any angle. To draw straight lines

in Painter I do the following.

I click the Straight Line button, usually just by pressing the [V] key this is the shortcut key for the Straight Line button and makes any brush draw only in straight lines.

Using my stylus I click in the drawing where I want to start my line. I then click the spot where I want to end the line. I can also drag the small crosshair cursor to the spot I want the line to end. When I'm finished placing the cursors,

Painter will draw the connecting line.

If I want to continue drawing from the second point, I simply continue to click or drag and to create additional points. Painter then continues to connect the points.

When I'm finished drawing the straight lines I press Enter and Painter automatically closes the lines forming a polygon. If I don't want a closed shape I simply press the [V] key or click on the Freehand Line button.

That is all there is to creating a drawing with straight lines in Painter. It's very simple yet it gives you great control. By varying the brushes that I use, I get an infinite number of effects



limit my straight line to either the horizontal or vertical. I just hold down the Shift key for this. Holding Shift also







ImagineNation Artist Q&A

Question

How can I get rid of that generic 'Barbie on Prozac' look on Poser figures in Painter or Photoshop post production? Nick Read, UK



Answer

Adam replies

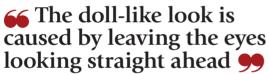


I know the 'look' you refer to - and it's better to start resolving it within Poser first, enabling you to keep

heavy post-work to a minimum. I don't know what characters you are working with, but many of the thirdparty ones like the Millennium range from Daz3D, have an enormous library of sophisticated morphs and detailed textures, that really enable you to customise and 'sculpt' the form and expressive features to your liking. It's also important to remember that the body pose itself, along with the subtle positioning of the eyes, is what will help bring life to your character. Too often, that doll-like, or stoned look is caused simply by leaving the eyes looking straight ahead in their default position and not creating any

facial expression with adjusted brows, squint, lip curl, etc. Also, although facial symmetry is considered beautiful, it's also fairly uncommon (certainly not as mirror-like as in a CG model) and subsequently looks unnatural to us. You can avoid this by adjusting these morphs to be subtly different on each side of the face.

Finally, like with any image, the lighting is going to play a part in setting the mood and helping to define the details of the character, so consider how the lighting is positioned in the paintings you admire. When it comes to the post-work, subtle use of the smudge, dodge and burn tools can tweak and accentuate the features nicely, and if you really want to post edit the features further, try the Liquefy tool in Photoshop.















How do I paint simple reflections on a flat surface, for example on a shiny floor? Isaac Harris-Cook, US

Answer

Henning replies



You can use guide lines when painting reflections. You have to think in three dimensions, because the old Flip Vertically

solution only works when the point of view is located exactly on the same level as the reflective surface.

Imagine the vanishing points in the scene – one at the back in the horizon and one far down, vertically. You will have to imagine what direction they are located according to the angles of other elements in the scene.

Make a new layer and draw some guide lines of objects getting reflected in the



If the reflective surface has some texture, such as floor tiles, ensure the reflection tones fade out and don't continue all the way to the bottom of the picture, so that the reflection dies off.

mirrored surface (the walls and corners, here). Imagine how it would look if the floor was transparent and the walls dipped down through it, towards the vanishing point at the bottom.

Put a new layer under the one with the guides. Colour-pick the colours of the reflected objects (the walls) and copy it, reversed (vertically flipped) following the guides.

The use of highlighted vertical strokes on the sharp edges of the reflection make it look shinier. Work your way downwards from where the reflection starts. Next, set the layer blending style to Screen and tone down the layers opacity to make it look the way you want. Remember that the deeper a reflection goes, the less visible it is, so use a large smooth brush and erase the bottom part.





Your ques

Coming next month Our artists answer your questions on:

Creating realistic depth of field **Letratone effects in Photoshop** Drawing neat outlines

QuestionHelp! What's the best way to make a stone texture in Photoshop? Mark Temple, UK

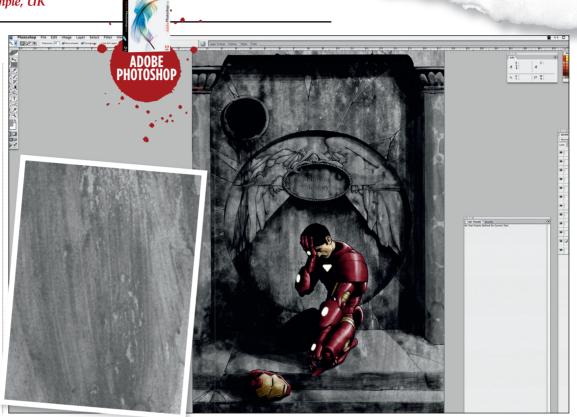
Answer Frazer replies



The thing about textures is that very often you need a starting point outside of the computer. For my uses I

made several painted samples, using watercolour/tea/food dye on watercolour paper and allowed them to dry with puddles of colour on them. These were then scanned and saved as basic templates. When I need a particularly rough texture (such as stone) I refer to these scans, pasting them into the area I need to fill, and then I use variations on the Dodge/ Burn tool and the Paintbrush to add shadows, pick out highlights, etc. Once the basic tonal noodling has been done I can always add subtle washes of colour using a new layer set to overlay and playing with the opacity.

Although you'll be using Photoshop to help finalise your stone textures, the process starts far away from any software. I start by creating templates from scanned in pictures of tea stains, ink, food colouring, etc.



Step-by-step: Creating stone-like textures...



Once the basic texture scan has been pasted into place and sized to fit, the first thing I do is use the Brush tool to block in any shadows that may be needed to make it match up with the main image.



Now I switch to the Burn tool. Using a Bristle brush, with the exposure set to 50 per cent, I gently work some of the darker tones into the texture, trying to work with the natural grooves of the original scan.



Finally I switch to the Dodge tool, and using a similar brush as before with the exposure set to 50 per cent, I pick out any brighter streaks such as weather damage or general highlights, aiming to retain the subtle textures inherent in the watercolour scan.

Got a digital art problem? Brushes out of control? Our panel can help. Emailyour question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.

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Linda Tso

Meet the artist who, since discovering fantasy art just three years ago, has really found her niche

t's easy to lose yourself in the enchanted worlds that Linda Tso's sublimely crafted characters inhabit. Her work has a magical quality, that draws you in before guiding you around every inch of the digital canvas, then spitting you back out and making you realise what a beautiful image you've just been gazing into.

The young artist has an incredible talent for achieving mood, through subtle use of colour, tone, and detailed, yet not overworked form. Somewhat unbelievable when you consider she only started painting digitally in 2003. "I stumbled across a few art community sites, namely GFX Artist and DeviantArt," she tells us, recalling her introduction into the world of fantasy art. "From then on I was exposed to some stunning digital paintings and after a while, I decided to try my hand at that too. I started by copying photos then slowly learning to paint my own things, and learning how to draw people."

Linda reveals that it wasn't until she'd finished her second ever painting that she gave in and bought a Wacom tablet: "Painting with a mouse was just torture," she laughs. Today Linda works almost exclusively in digital mediums, from the sketch through to

the final composition. The initial sketch is usually completed without any kind of reference material – coming straight from the artist's head. "I sketch on the computer, a very rough sketch at first, refine it to a degree, and start painting on a layer beneath," Linda explains. "I block in the main colours first, and sometimes I flatten down the sketch layer to the paint layer. I usually use more

layers than necessary - the character would at least be on a separate layer." She continues, "I play around a lot with colour Adjustment Layers to reach a scheme that I like before really getting down to the details. I have a tendency to use lighter and brighter colours, combinations that lean towards 'pastel-ish' and candy-like. I don't know why, maybe it's because I prefer colours to appear as they are and under bright sunlight. After that it's just a matter of refining and tying everything together." Linda reveals that on average the time taken to produce one of her digital paintings is around 20 hours: "Although this can be anywhere from a few hours to many, many, many hours, spanning weeks."

The complexity of digital painting software only aids Linda in her artistic quest: "I am fascinated by the use of layers and colour adjustment tools. It provides a lot of room for experimentation." The advantages of digital mediums don't stop there: "It's clean as well," laughs Linda. But, as Linda freely admits, there are some disadvantages to working digitally: "You can become too reliant on effects, and you must learn about colour from the offset. Also, it's tempting to spend an endless amount of time fiddling with details when you don't really need to."

Still on the subject of Linda's working methods, she states that Photoshop 7 is the tool of choice, with Painter 8 coming a close second. "I use the Hardedged brush as a general purpose brush, but also a set of 'dirty' custom brushes. I've also created a special smudging brush. In Painter I mostly use the Tinting and Acrylic brushes – and anything with bristles is great for painting hair!"



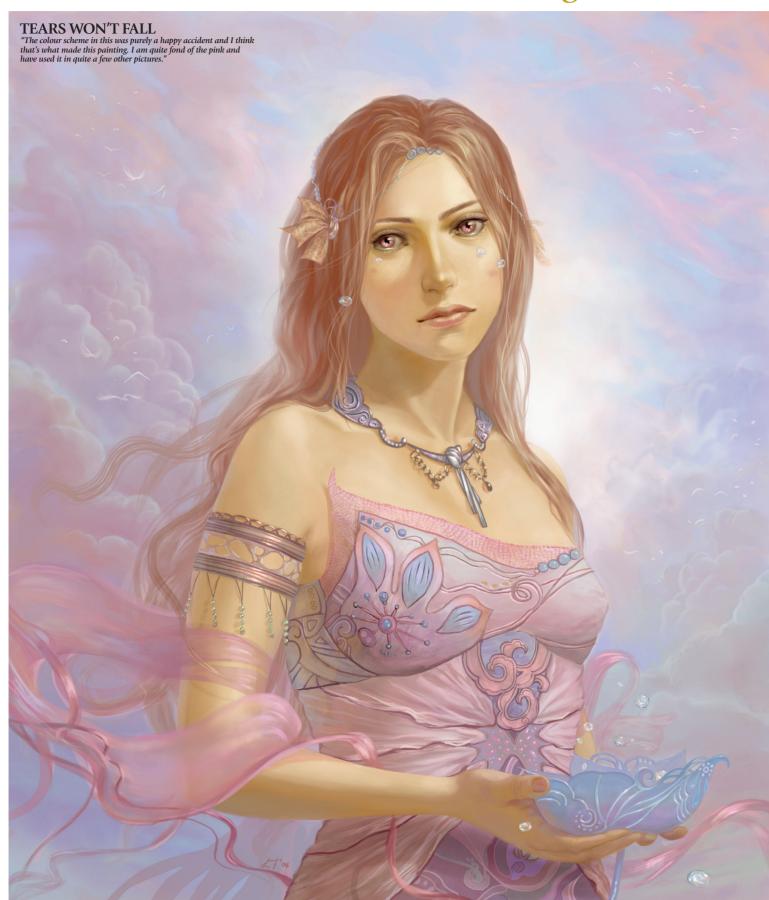








Rising Star Linda Tso





















Rising Star Linda Tso



Finding inspiration for new pieces can be a toil for any artist, but thanks to the thriving global fantasy art community, rife with work and ideas, and willing to share them, this is not a problem for Linda. "Art sites, graphic novels, art books – I'm inspired by anything and everything." She adds: "I'm predominantly inspired by the mood a particular piece conveys by its use of colour. Dreams, movies, and music play a role, too. Maybe an interesting shape of a cast shadow or a nice dress in a magazine. I love clouds too, even though I can't seem to paint them as well as I'd like."

As you can see, Linda is an artist who's always on the lookout for the next angle, the next spark, the next idea, that leads to one of her trademark enchanted visions.

When quizzed on her thoughts on how the traditional art world sees the kind of art Linda is producing, she is hesitant to take the bait we so kindly presented on a plate. "My own familiarity with the art world would be too limited to answer this question, I think," she replies. However, Linda begins to open up: "For the most part I have been more involved

with the online art communities, and the digital artists I got to know through them. I haven't really encountered the snobbish elitist type who doesn't consider fantasy art 'art' at all, neither of those who think traditional art is more superior to digital art." Our loaded question eventually leads Linda to reveal a sense of karma with her current situation. "I'm in a niche I feel comfortable in, with lots of people who share my enthusiasm, and that's good enough for me."

Linda Tso is still building her career as a digital artist, though the foundations are as solid as they come. But even at this early stage in what is bound to be an incredible and aweinspiring journey, she has some nigh-on essential advice for young artists everywhere: "Whatever you want to paint or draw, you have to learn what it really looks like first. And know how to accept critiques. Make friends with other artists through community websites. Practise constantly and as you get better and develop a style you will begin to gain more recognition." Taking notice of an artist with such a refined eye for colour and form can only be a good idea.

April 2006 limagine X









In depth Digital fantasy portraits

PROFILE

Henning Ludvigsen COUNTRY: Norway

CLIENTS: Fantasy Flight Games, Future



digital artist
with basic
traditional art

and 12 years experience in digital art, design, and illustration. He is the Art Director of a computer game development company and works on commissions and projects in his spare time.

DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

FILES:

Raised_by_bats_1.psd Raised_by_bats_2.psd Raised_by_bats_3.psd Raised_by_bats_4.psd Raised_by_bats_5.psd SOFTWARE:

Photoshop CS2 (Demo)

Photoshop

DIGITAL FANTASY PORTRAITS

A guide to making a fantastic fantasy-themed portrait that resembles the reference model. By **Henning Ludvigsen**

his tutorial requires basic painting skills, along with a little knowhow of a program such as Adobe Photoshop.
You'll also need a drawing tablet, like my good ol' Wacom Intuos.

I'll explain my methods step by step, from the taking of reference pictures, via the preparations for making the first sketch, all the way through to the painting process itself.

Firstly, when making a realistic-looking portrait, the most important thing is to sort out the personal features of the

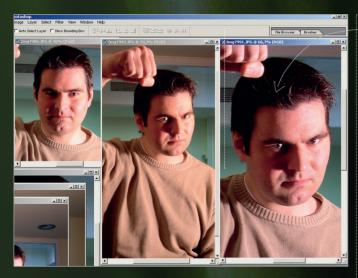
character you're painting, and to keep the proportions correct. This is why using reference pictures is crucial: the better the quality of reference pictures, the easier it is to find the most important features and recreate them in your painting.

You can easily improvise a basic photo studio in your own living room, by using some bright lamps, or even better, one of those 150 or 500 Watt floodlights that may or may not be lying about in your garage! Lighting the reference model from one side, or from other interesting angles, makes everything a lot more

believable. I love playing around with light sources, to see what kind of shapes the shadows can conjure up.

My personal opinion is that there are things the mind simply can't come up with on its own, and this is why I value having reference pictures to look at while painting. This goes for anything from people to objects, and especially things like drapes and fabric folds.

In this tutorial, I'll also show you how to make a hard-edged brush, which is the brush I use almost exclusively when creating this kind of painting.



Shooting the reference picture

I tend to just use what I have on hand when shooting reference pictures, like a normal digital camera and a floor lamp (those really bright ones). I prefer shining the light from the side, since this creates some interesting shadows and highlights on faces and drapes. Another tip is to switch off that nasty camera flash!

Eyedropper tool
Alt (PC) Option (Mac)
When using brushes in
Photoshop, holding down
this button gives you
quick access to the
Eyedropper tool.

2 Selecting the best reference picture

It's great to have many pictures to pick from. The way I personally like to select pictures, is to look at two at a time, discarding the ones I like least in each pair. For the composition, I try to find a picture with a good silhouette and an interesting look in the eyes of the model, which is important if observers are to "connect" with the piece. I also tend to pick pictures that are in semi-profile, since these look a lot more interesting than the full frontal ones.

With this piece, I wanted my friend to look a little grumpy, even though he will probably also look quite funny holding his familiar bat. I like weird combinations, and I think this particular duality fits my friend's character quite well, which is what portraits are all about.

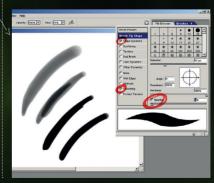
About brushes

When I first started out making digital art in Photoshop, I used the soft airbrush too much. This made everything appear blurry, and I didn't really get the crispness that I look for in a

piece nowadays. One day my girlfriend convinced me to put the soft airbrush away, and I tried painting with a hardedged brush instead. The outcome was highly interesting, especially since the process felt somewhat close to painting/drawing with a traditional medium.

How to make a hard-edged brush

- 1) Select a custom made brush which is round and hard.
- 2) Open Window/Brushes.
- 3) Select Brush Tip Shape, and set the spacing slider to 6-7 per cent. Make sure the Smoothing option is ticked.

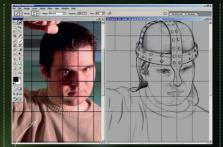


April 2006 ImagineFX



PRO SECRETS

It's simple: make regular backups of work you have in progress. I always make sure to have 2-3 backups on my hard drive in addition to the one I am working on, plus at least one on a separate external device. Also, saving progress steps as you go along is clever, since you'll have something to fall back on in case of errors or



Starting the sketch

of the grid layer in my blank canvas window, and then I make a new layer, which I place in between the background and the grid. This layer is where I plan to start sketching.

While looking closely at the reference photo, I draw the outlines of the person grid-by-grid, using a hard-edged brush with black colour set to around 7-15 per cent flow. At this stage, I don't draw the character's hand.

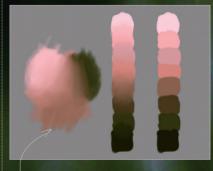
Also, remember that even if you don't need to think about what you are drawing while using the grid, always try to keep in mind what kind of shapes you are making, to prevent you from stagnating art-wise. I still usually think in shapes, and I also add some help lines to aid me when shading later.

I want my friend to wear a helmet, so I add one at this stage of the process. When making the sketch, I usually start off in medium resolution. blocking shape layer and the sketch layer. (Link the two layers in the layers menu, and choose Merge Linked in the Layers drop down menu.) I also add some more details to the character's outfit.

If you enable the Lock Transparent Pixels feature on the Layers menu, it ensures that you don't paint outside the already painted elements.

At this point, I start adding greyscale values using black/white colours as foreground/background colours (press X to toggle), with the brush set to 3-6 per cent flow.

I always start with the eyes because I need to get this aspect right before I can move on – the look in the eyes are a very important part of any portrait. I keep looking closely at the reference picture for inspiration while doing this, and I usually turn the grids off at this stage. I also increase the resolution around now, before I start adding details and proper rendering.



Making a skin tone palette

I spend quite some time thinking about what kind of skin tones I want the character to have. I follow a simple procedure, which consists of blending in the main light source colour with the brightest skin tones, and the ambient

light colour with the darkest skin tones. For this painting, I want to use a cold blue coloured light directed from the right as the main light source, and green values as ambient, which will show in shadowed areas and in backlight from back left.

Since I need easy access to a pre-made skin tone palette, I make a new layer where I include a range of colours needed for shading the basic values of the skin, from the brightest to the darkest. Try blending the values together to see if it works well, and remember: skin tones are usually darker than you think.

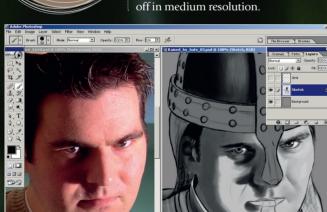


Adding base colours to the sketch

At this stage, I make sure I have the sketch layer selected, then change the brush mode to Colour and the flow to 5-10 per cent. I also turn on the Lock Transparent Pixels feature in the Layers menu.

(

Using the Eyedropper tool by holding down the Alt key (or Option on a Mac), I pick the brightest skin colour from the skin tone palette I've made, and apply this colour to the brightest areas of the face. I do this on all the different skin tones, and add rough base colours for clothes, hair, eyes, etc. At this stage, the colours usually look a bit off, but this doesn't matter, since all you should be concerned with is establishing a good base to start off with.



Blocking in and shading the sketch

Once I have a decent sketch ready, I make a new layer between the background and the sketch. Here, I block in the character with a greyscale colour and the brush set to 100 per cent flow. Then I merge the





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In depth Digital fantasy portraits



9 Rendering the skin properly

Rendering the skin properly usually means a lot of work: painting over everything you've done dozens of times, and mixing lots of colours. Before I start, I make a new layer on top of the character, in case I do something silly that messes it all up later on. Then I change my brush back to Normal mode, and start to render the skin properly in a painstaking step-by-step fashion. The rewards are truly worth it, though.

What is really important at this stage is to mix colours, and to avoid monochrome palettes. You may prefer mixing colours on the side of where you are painting, but I prefer mixing directly where I paint. An example: In the area where the bright skin colour meets the dark green skin, I paint a translucent brush stroke with the bright skin colour over the dark area, then I use the Eyedropper tool [Alt] and pick the new value I create there.

If I need some purple or blue hue around the eyes, I make a blue colour, paint a translucent brush stroke on top of the skin colour, and colour pick this new value. Remember to look closely at the reference photo and try and sort out the different colour values of the different kinds of skin variants.

Adding foreground elements

The hand is made in a new layer on top of the character, and I feel that now's the time to use the grid again to aid me with proportions. The bat is something that I paint freehand after looking at several pictures of bats for inspiration. I now add colours using the same procedures detailed in step 7.

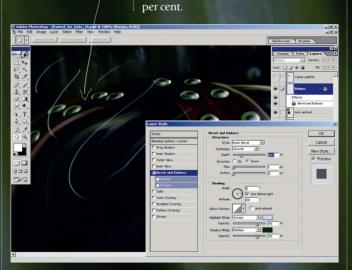
Brushing up and adding details

Things are really starting to take shape now aren't they? Here, I add some proper colours to the bat and the hand, and render some semi-detailed fur on the bat. The guy's outfit is also in need of a few extra details and some better shading, so I attend to that.

Embossed details

A nice way of adding detail to everything from wrinkles to cracks and textures in stone, is to make a layer with a Bevel and Emboss layer style:

- 1) Make a new layer, set the layer to Multiply.
- 2) Add a Bevel and Emboss layer style, and set the depth slider to the centre, or a little more. Set direction to Down, Size to 1 per cent, Soften to 0 per cent, and set Angle to whatever direction you're using for the light in your scene.
 3) Use white colour on the hard-edged brush, and keep the flow around 5-15







Making the background

Since this is a portrait, I want to use a simple background, and, after some experimenting, I end up with the one you can see. As I've experienced many times before, the simple solutions are usually -and thankfully! - best. For this background, I simply make a very rough and messy sketch of the inside of a cave. Try using a thin brush with a solid flow, and then paint in a dynamic and messy manner – it will creates some interesting details later on in the process. Of course, I make sure the main light source is directed from the right of the picture, giving the brightest areas a blue tint, and leaving the dark areas green.

At the end, I run a Gaussian blur filter, and I paint on some moody, green fog at the bottom. This will lighten up the picture slightly, and also give it some more depth.



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PRO SECRETS

Slow down on details

Adding detail is great, but I've learned that spending too much time on them rarely yields the expected results. Instead to surfaces. It's all about giving the impression that things have details and surface, but it's not

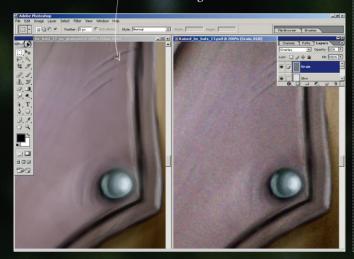
Adding soft glow

At this point, the soft brush gets used for the first time. I add a soft glow to the brightest areas in the picture in a new layer. It's easy to take the glow effect too far, and my advice would be to leave it as subtle as possible. You shouldn't notice the glow, it should only be a natural part of the picture.

Wrapping up A trick to make paintings look less computer-perfect is to add some grain to them. In Photoshop, follow these steps: 1) Make a new layer filled with the RBG-values: R:128, G:128, B:128. 2) Add a Noise filter, 400 per cent

- amount, and set the layer to Overlay blending mode.
- 3) Run the Brush Strokes>Spatter filter a couple of times.
- 4) Do a normal blur and set the layer Opacity to 5-10 per cent.

I also add a couple of overlay layers and mess around with some textured brushes to give the clothes more textures.









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Bringing science fiction's big hits to life with shape and colour, Jim Burns is a master creator of worlds...

llustrating science fiction literature demands an artist with a clear and convincing vision of the future. Jim Burns is that man for leading authors such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Silverberg and Peter F Hamilton. A science fiction world-builder par excellence - and the only non-American to win a Hugo Award for Art (Best Science Fiction Artist) Jim sees through the eyes of the authors he works for to create what he calls "Narrative snapshots realistically depicting things that do not exist."

PILOT OF THE FUTURE

Jim started early: "Even at the age of three or four I loved drawing cars and aeroplanes." Once ignited, his fascination with all things technological grew like wild fire: "At some point it subtly transformed itself into the love of science fiction." Like any fire, fuel was needed; it came in the form of Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future. Jim was hooked: "I adored the story lines! But even more, the fabulous artwork of Frank Hampson, and later Frank Bellamy," he enthuses.

Jim's obsession with aviation

PROFILE

Jim Burns

Born in 1948, the illustrator has a flare for realising the imagined future

worlds of sci-fi literature in paint and pixel. His work for authors such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Silverberg and Peter Hamilton mean his universes are carried in the minds of generations of fans, worldwide. A prolific artist, he still works for print and collectors.

continued to grow unabated, chiefly expressing itself in an assortment of increasingly futuristic drawings. "Common sense dictated that I should have gone straight from school to art college," Jim smiles. "But my heart spoke louder than my brain!"

And so in the spring of 1966, 18-year-old Jim was inducted into the RAF as a trainee pilot. Things didn't work out. "I never achieved the exalted status of fighter pilot – though that was very much my ambition," he sighs. That may be so but it's better by far to have loved and lost.

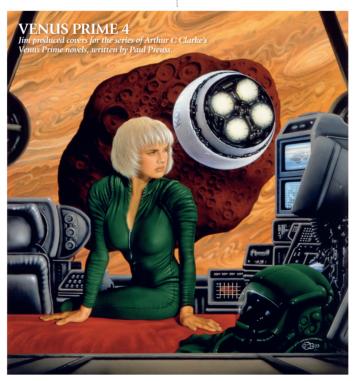
"It seems so long ago," Jim recalls of his Royal Air Force days. "And in such a bizarre conjunction with my life now that it acquires a more and more dream-like quality as the years go by..." With feet firmly on the ground, Jim continued to reach for the sky by

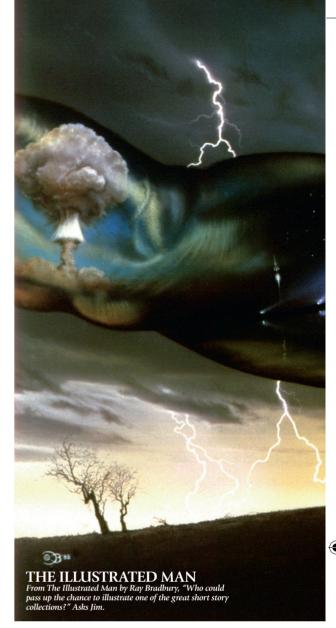
embarking on a foundation course in art and design at Newport School of Art.

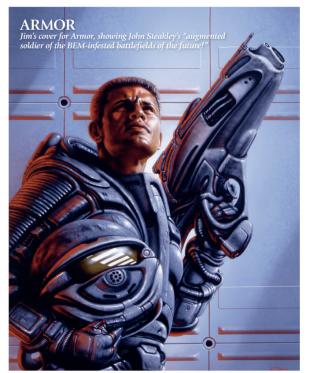
FOSS THINGS FIRST

"I can't pinpoint the date," says Jim, "but it was when I first saw the work of Chris Foss spread across a Sunday colour supplement article, sometime in the late 60s." That was when the penny dropped: "In that moment I realised there was a potential career for me in this rather peculiar discipline."

The budding artist began working towards his new goal. "Everything I painted was informed in some way by that revelatory moment." Six years after signing up as a flyboy, Jim finished his first commission for Sphere Books, for a war-time thriller, called The Lost Command. "The artwork was gloriously executed in pencil and coloured crayons."

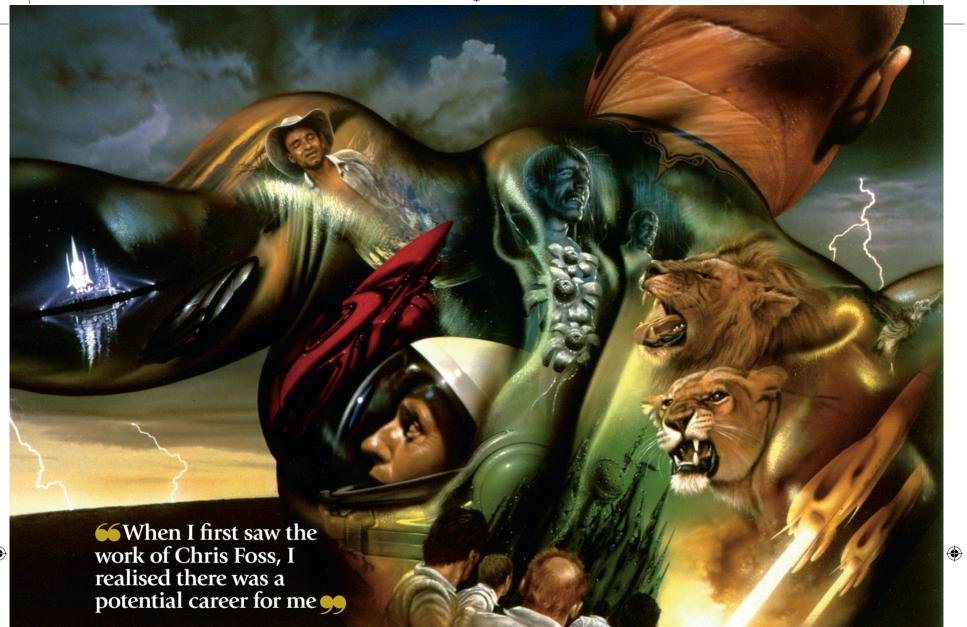
















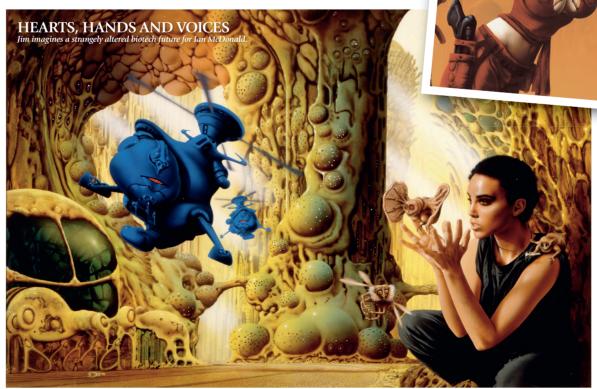




Having worked for some of the biggest names in sci-fi – even brushing shoulders with Syd Mead over the concept work for Blade Runner – Jim is assured his place in history. However, he is typically self-deprecating about his talent: "I would say I'm technically competent but somewhat pedestrian," he claims.

It's startling to learn that, even at the level Jim has reached, there's still an element of doubt in there. "The whole thing is redeemed by a rather good imagination and the ability to convey my ideas into paint," he reasons. So it must be true that an artist is never satisfied with his or her work.

Asked if he'd like to visit any of the worlds he's envisioned for sci-fi fans the world over, he's unequivocal: "Most of them look like dystopian hell-holes to me, so I think I'll stay put in Wiltshire!" A seat on the next shuttle launch, then? "That I could not resist."









Vision Afar, the accomplished artworks of Gary Tonge, give us a glimpse beyond the edge of the known universe...



Gary Tonge



AGE: 35 COUNTRY: UK FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Craig

Mullins (digital); Syd Mead (traditional)

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

CS (for painting) **AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE:**

The Vision Afar images took 15-20 hours; final concept

pieces take 8-12 hours; speed painting takes less than 80 minutes.

WFR: www.visionafar.com/va



lmaginelX April 2006





olour. I love how it can make you feel cold, hot, happy, sad, in awe or scared." Colour is important to Gary Tonge. "It's such a powerful force," he says. "If used well." And indeed he does, producing dreamy visions of impossibly far reaching scenes. Gary paints in order to understand: "I think that maybe space is our closest glimpse of the totally, utterly unimaginable truth of reality."

Taken together, Gary's Vision Afar images show an amazing sense of perspective, so strong in certain images you could fall in if you weren't careful. "I have always been fascinated with grand scales," admits Gary. The artist traces his fascination to a particular moment: "The Star Destroyer/ Corvette sequence at the start of Star Wars," he points out, excitedly. Gary remembers that he was precisely seven and a half at the time when the arrival of the Empire made its bold and long-lasting impression: "It was a stunning scene."

The concentration of under-twelves left slack-jawed with awe has probably never been higher, in that theatre or any other: "I think from that point on you could say I have been very interested in perspective and atmospheric depth." Thank you, Mr Lucas.

ON THE DRAWING BOARD

Gary works as an art director at a leading game development studio: "That means in my day job I create artwork for clients, very

rarely having the chance to work on something I really want to," he notes. But he points out that there's good and bad in this: "To be honest, you learn by being pushed away from your area of comfort."

Gary admits he found the technical requirements of the gaming world blunted his artistic excitement somewhat, and he needed to let off creative steam. "I never did any art for me, so I decided to start painting some pieces that I wanted to see." Pretty quickly, the artist realised he wanted to share his work with the world, and www. visionafar.com was born.

What started as a personal project has paid an unexpected dividend. Gary is now faced with the option of illustrating full time: "I'm quite keen on that," he enthuses. "Art directing can be fun, but hands-on is where the real sparks fly!"

STYLE GUIDE

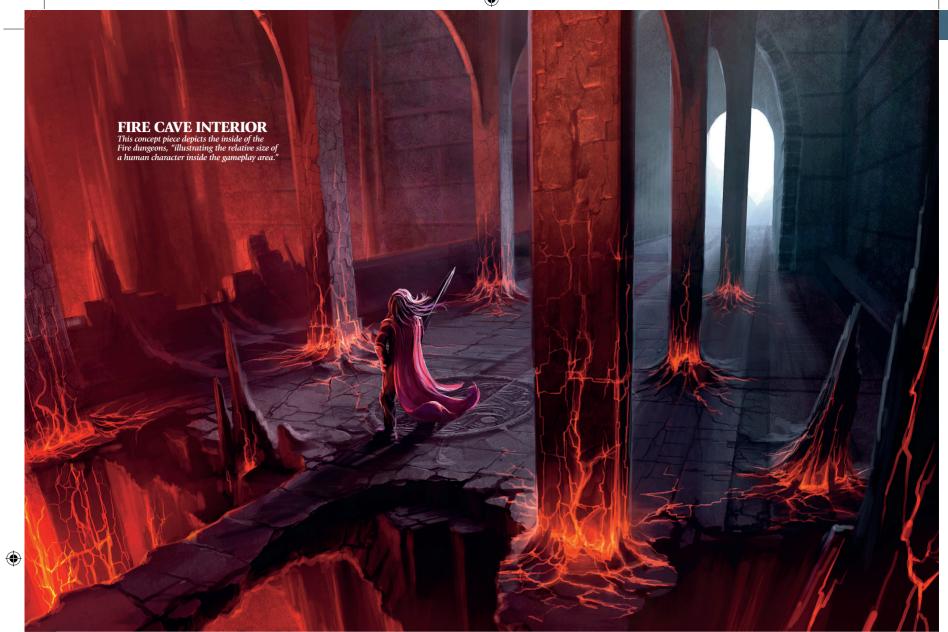
What drives Gary's style? "Oh, I used to be obsessed with clean detailing and nice lighting, but I'm definitely evolving that style," he explains. His current look is still quite fresh, but you can see the brush starting to loosen up, particularly in his speed paintings. "I've started to speed paint more recently," he adds. "This involves me smashing random brush shapes around for between 30 and 90 minutes in an effort to produce a vivid and spontaneous image." This approach is naturally feeding through to other areas.



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Artist portfolio ... GARY TONGE

→ "My concepts are pretty loose as well," Gary observes. "I find it important not to get too tied up in little details when you're trying to convey a feeling or idea." Of course, as he produces his work in Photoshop, this freeing-up process is contingent on the speed and flexibility of the underlying technology.

COMPUTER LOVE

Gary first entered the games industry in 1987. "Back then, we made very crude graphics for computers, on computers," he recalls. But things have come a long way since then: "Now I find the digital environment a wonderful place to be."

He acknowledges that digital painting is not without its disadvantages, of course: "Like not being able to see a big canvas in full res." But Gary is so used to this limitation he hardly sees it any more. And along with many others he feels that the medium is beginning to come of age. He reckons that until recently, digital was seen as a 'pretend' medium – a poor alternative to natural media only chosen through necessity. He thinks that has changed now: "It's becoming

quite respected, thanks a large part to feature films and conceptual design."

ALL IN THE MIND

One thing computers will (probably) never be able to replace is the imagination of people like Gary. "I'm always seeing images in my head." These images implore Gary to make them real. "But the rational part of my mind tells me I just haven't got time to paint them all!"

So what is out there, in Gary's universe?

"Ok, conjecture time. I would surmise that what we can see is a fraction of what there actually is. I cannot believe there isn't an intellect behind all of what we consider to be real." The so-called teleological argument.

"Space, matter, time – all of these things would therefore be a part of that being's creation. And if it is created, how many more people and races are out there in the far reaches of the universe? And what are they up to?" The possibilities seem endless, to Gary, but one thing's certain in his mind:

"There have got to be some kick ass spaceships out there too."

TONGE TECHNIQUE

Turning a vision into a reality

"If I have an idea for an image I try to sketch it down straight away,' says Gary. For this task, he favours a pencil, but Photoshop and a Wacom are now being called in more frequently.

"Quite a few of my Vision Afar images get this far and no more," he laments. Only a small proportion can be completed given the fact that a finished piece can take 30 hours.

"Recently, I've been blocking out rough compositions in colour with Photoshop and seeing how they hold together." If these take shape nicely, they progress to stage two.

"I'll probably use a layer of perspective construction lines," continues Gary. "I take into account lens bend etc, just to make things difficult for me, and then I start to add detail and the right lighting feel." For VA pieces, he says this process could go on for some time. "I do 30 minutes here and there until I am in a position where I am happy enough, or fed up enough, to post it up."

Concepts and commissions are two divergent processes. "Concepts involve a more fluid approach to the ideas, lots of colour keys and rough sketches," explains the artist. Commissions on the other hand, "involve a lot of client liaison" and are therefore more incrementally developed.

66 How many more people and races are out there in the far reaches of the universe? And what are they up to? 99





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SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Uwe Jarling

LOCATION: Germany
WEB: www.jarling-arts.com
EMAIL: uwe@jarling-arts.com
JOB: Freelance concept artist



Uwe is a traditional artist but for the last three years, a large majority of his images have been created using digital tools. Uwe

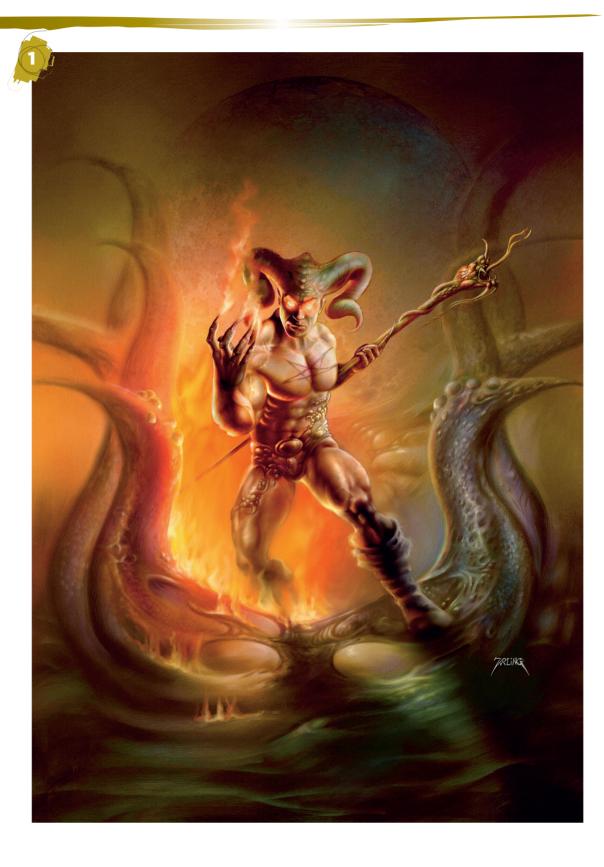
experimented with several digital tools, including 3D: "I tried 3ds max, Poser, Vue, Bryce and some others, but they just didn't fit."

So Uwe decided to work mainly
2D with digital media: "All my paintings
are done with Painter IX then colour
corrected in Photoshop," explains Uwe.

Working as a graphic designer since 1991, Uwe made an important decision in 2000. "That's when I decided to develop my fantasy artwork more seriously," he says. Since then, from his base in little village in southern Germany, Uwe has been producing fantastic illustrations for clients all over the world.

BORN IN FLAMES "This image started as a character concept with a dynamic pose," explains Uwe. "But then I decided to colour the work and add a background to set the figure off and it ended up as what you see here."

PALCONS Another Painterly exercise: "I mainly used Painters oils and pastels for this one," says Uwe. "I painted here as if I would paint with oil colours using mainly opaque colours and not too many glazes."





















LOCATION: UK
WEB: www.jp-ar.org
EMAIL: sovietarmy@uol.com.br
JOB: 2D freelancer



"When I was a kid," says 25-year old João Ruas, "I wanted to be an astronaut, a geographer, a football player and an illustrator -

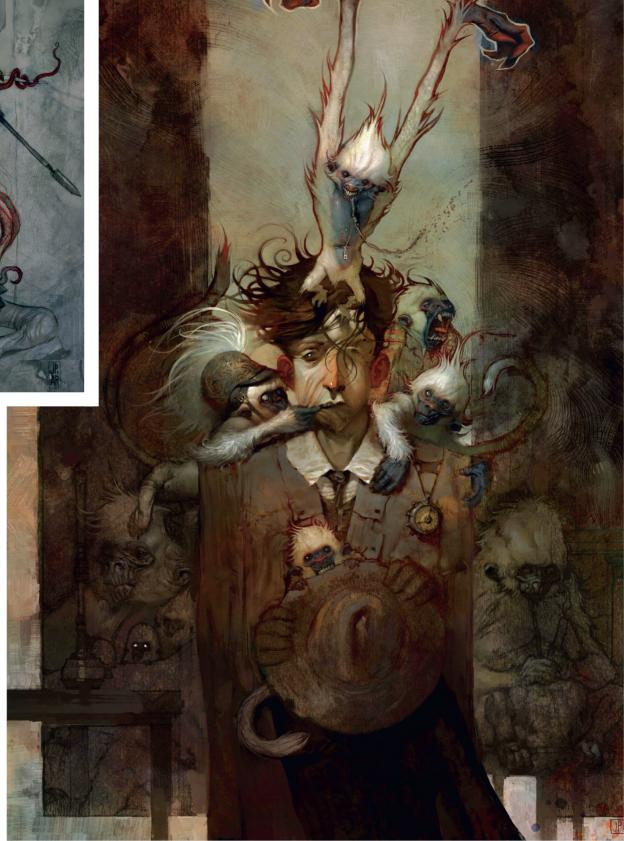
all at the same time."

Blimey. One out of four isn't bad, though: "I became an illustrator - that's enough for me." João went to his first drawing course when he was 13. "It was a simple school in São Paulo with an old Spanish teacher and I was there two times a week until I was 15," he recalls.

Then came technical high school: "I did a course that in English would be called 'communicative drawing'." Then to university where João studied Digital Design and, after four years got his diploma and decided that he would try a career as an illustrator/concept artist.

THE WORM HERO "I didn't have any idea of what I was doing when I started this," says João. "But then at some point characters began to appear and they started to tell a story."

MONKEYS "With this image I tried to make one of those paintings with hidden messages," says João. "It was done using pencil, watercolor, gouache and loads of Photoshop."









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I*■David Levy

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.vyle-art.com
EMAIL: vylewind@yahoo.com
JOB: Concept artist, Ubisoft



David, who hails from Montpellier, France, studied industrial design at the European Institute of Toulon, France where he

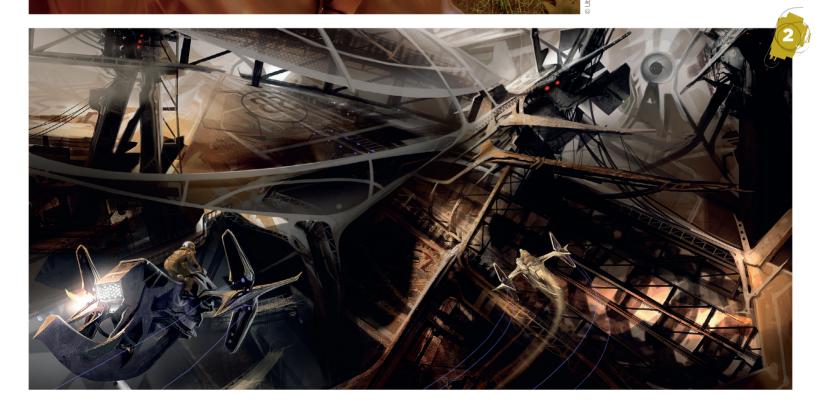
graduated with a BTS (Brevet de Technicien Superieur). From there he went to Maastricht, Netherlands to study Interior Architecture and graduated in 1996 with a BA with honours in Industrial Design and Architecture.

"Upon graduation I was invited to become part of a large videogame company in Europe as a concept artist," says the artist. "I've worked in that industry ever since." David, whose credits include Turok and Prince of Persia is a regular contributor to art workshops such as Conceptart.org, GDC and Gnomon. He currently lives in Quebec, Canada. He's got talent, that's for sure, but we'd most like to get our hands on his AirMiles...

FARAH Created for a marketing image on Prince of Persia 3, using XSI to pose a previously modelled character created by the cinematic team, 3ds max to create the drapery and grass, and Photoshop for the painting. "I had total freedom on the composition and choice of the image," David recalls. "That is extremely rare."

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ARCHI_L This image started as brush testing in Photoshop. "It ended as an exercise in texture and composition," David says.







On the disc

WELCOME TO THE FANTASY<mark>&</mark> SCI-FI DIGITAL ART COMPANION DV



Welcome to this issue's DVD. This month we have a truly packed resource for you - not only containing high-res workshop files from some of the best artists (including Henning Ludvigsen and Marta

Dahlig), but also a bevy of software, resources and other goodies.

You'll find demos of the latest versions of Bryce, Poser, Painter, Photoshop and more, plus 15 free fonts, 15 high-res images and 15 high-res textures; all invaluable in your dayto-day creative endeavours.

In addition, we bring you some excellent 'speedpaint' tuition videos from leading concept artist Martin Bland. Enjoy!

Tom Rudderham, **DVD** Editor

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Imagine X April 2006

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FXPosé Artist gallery

Check out an extended collection of great fantasy and sci-fi artists' work in our FXPosé gallery.



Manga Studio 3

(PC only) ○ Demo Check out this amazing tool for creating authentic manga pages.

The Imagine X DVD

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FULL LISTING

DEMO SOFTWARE

- Bryce 5.5 (Mac and PC)
- Carrara 5 Pro (Mac and PC)
- Painter Essentials (Mac and PC)
- Painter IX (Mac and PC)
- Photoshop CS (Mac and PC)
- Poser 6 (Mac and PC)
- ArtRage 2 (Mac and PC)
- SketchBook Pro 2 (Mac and PC)
- Daz Studio 1.0 (Mac and PC)

RESOURCES AND EXTRAS

- Free Daz models
- 15 free fonts
- 15 high-res images
- 15 high-res textures
- Martin Bland video tutorials

WORKSHOP FILES

See individual workshop pages for files and folders



Imagine Months Sci-Fi Digital ART Magine Months Shops Sci-Fi Digital ART Months Sci-Fi Digital A

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PAGES OF
TUITION

The software and files you need to complete this month's workshops...





If your DVD is missing please consult your newsagent

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68 Fantasy portraitsTurn a reference model into a fantasy-themed character

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Fairy woodland Get the right look, with Photoshop, Poser and Bryce

78 Fabric masterclass Paint gowns, embroidery and lace, with Marta Dahlig

© Comic colourRendering takes centre stage in part 3 of Frazer Irving's guide

Wacom wizardry
Advice on setting up and using a tablet

Make a manga page
Page composition, image, text
and layout tips

Classic tales
Bring alive a traditional
childen's story in Photoshop

G'Antique' sketching Create special effects using Sketchbook Pro

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90 What big brushes you have...
All the better to put the drama into Little
Red Riding Hood, By Jonny Duddle.







In depth Digital fantasy portraits

Artist PROFILE

Henning Ludvigsen country: Norwa

CLIENTS: Fantasy Flight Games, Future



Henning is a
digital artist
with basic
traditional art
education

and 12 years experience in digital art, design, and illustration. He is the Art Director of a computer game development company and works on commissions and projects in his spare time.

DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

Raised_by_bats_1.psd Raised_by_bats_2.psd Raised_by_bats_3.psd Raised_by_bats_4.psd Raised_by_bats_5.psd SOFTWARE:

Photoshop CS2 (Demo)

Photoshop

DIGITAL FANTASY PORTRAITS

A guide to making a fantastic fantasy-themed portrait that resembles the reference model. By **Henning Ludvigsen**

his tutorial requires basic painting skills, along with a little knowhow of a program such as Adobe Photoshop.
You'll also need a drawing tablet, like my good ol' Wacom Intuos.

I'll explain my methods step by step, from the taking of reference pictures, via the preparations for making the first sketch, all the way through to the painting process itself.

Firstly, when making a realistic-looking portrait, the most important thing is to sort out the personal features of the

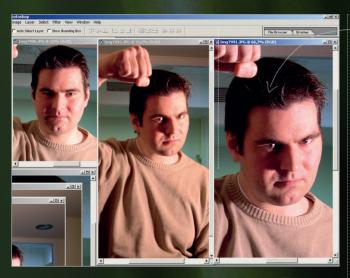
character you're painting, and to keep the proportions correct. This is why using reference pictures is crucial: the better the quality of reference pictures, the easier it is to find the most important features and recreate them in your painting.

You can easily improvise a basic photo studio in your own living room, by using some bright lamps, or even better, one of those 150 or 500 Watt floodlights that may or may not be lying about in your garage! Lighting the reference model from one side, or from other interesting angles, makes everything a lot more

believable. I love playing around with light sources, to see what kind of shapes the shadows can conjure up.

My personal opinion is that there are things the mind simply can't come up with on its own, and this is why I value having reference pictures to look at while painting. This goes for anything from people to objects, and especially things like drapes and fabric folds.

In this tutorial, I'll also show you how to make a hard-edged brush, which is the brush I use almost exclusively when creating this kind of painting.



Shooting the reference picture

I tend to just use what I have on hand when shooting reference pictures, like a normal digital camera and a floor lamp (those really bright ones). I prefer shining the light from the side, since this creates some interesting shadows and highlights on faces and drapes. Another tip is to switch off that nasty camera flash!

Eyedropper tool
Alt (PC) Option (Mac)
When using brushes in
Photoshop, holding down
this button gives you
quick access to the
Eyedropper tool.

2 Selecting the best reference picture

It's great to have many pictures to pick from. The way I personally like to select pictures, is to look at two at a time, discarding the ones I like least in each pair. For the composition, I try to find a picture with a good silhouette and an interesting look in the eyes of the model, which is important if observers are to "connect" with the piece. I also tend to pick pictures that are in semi-profile, since these look a lot more interesting than the full frontal ones.

With this piece, I wanted my friend to look a little grumpy, even though he will probably also look quite funny holding his familiar bat. I like weird combinations, and I think this particular duality fits my friend's character quite well, which is what portraits are all about.

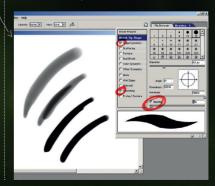
About brushes

When I first started out making digital art in Photoshop, I used the soft airbrush too much. This made everything appear blurry, and I didn't really get the crispness that I look for in a

piece nowadays. One day my girlfriend convinced me to put the soft airbrush away, and I tried painting with a hardedged brush instead. The outcome was highly interesting, especially since the process felt somewhat close to painting/drawing with a traditional medium.

How to make a hard-edged brush

- 1) Select a custom made brush which is round and hard.
- 2) Open Window/Brushes.
- 3) Select Brush Tip Shape, and set the spacing slider to 6-7 per cent. Make sure the Smoothing option is ticked.

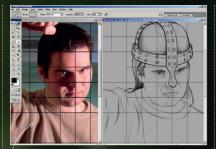


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PRO **SECRETS**

one I am working on, plus at least one on a clever, since you'll have something to fall back on you want to showcase the process later.



Starting the sketch

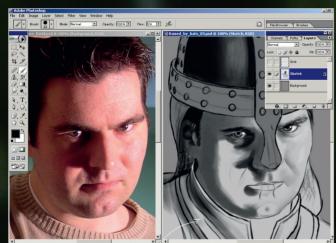
start by toning down the opacity of the grid layer in my blank canvas window, and then I make a new layer, which I place in between the background and the grid. This layer is where I plan to start sketching.

While looking closely at the reference photo, I draw the outlines of the person grid-by-grid, using a hard-edged brush with black colour set to around 7-15 per cent flow. At this stage, I don't draw the character's hand.

Also, remember that even if you don't need to think about what you are are making, to prevent you from stagnating art-wise. I still usually think to aid me when shading later.

I want my friend to wear a helmet, so I add one at this stage of the process. When making the sketch, I usually start off in medium resolution.

drawing while using the grid, always try to keep in mind what kind of shapes you in shapes, and I also add some help lines



Blocking in and shading the sketch

Once I have a decent sketch ready, I make a new layer between the background and the sketch. Here, I block in the character with a greyscale colour and the brush set to 100 per cent flow. Then I merge the

blocking shape layer and the sketch layer. (Link the two layers in the layers menu, and choose Merge Linked in the Layers drop down menu.) I also add some more details to the character's outfit.

If you enable the Lock Transparent Pixels feature on the Layers menu, it ensures that you don't paint outside the already painted elements.

At this point, I start adding greyscale values using black/white colours as foreground/background colours (press X to toggle), with the brush set to 3-6 per cent flow.

I always start with the eyes because I need to get this aspect right before I can move on - the look in the eyes are a very important part of any portrait. I keep looking closely at the reference picture for inspiration while doing this, and I usually turn the grids off at this stage. I also increase the resolution around now, before I start adding details and proper rendering.



Making a skin tone palette

I spend quite some time thinking about what kind of skin tones I want the character to have. I follow a simple procedure, which consists of blending in the main light source colour with the brightest skin tones, and the ambient

light colour with the darkest skin tones. For this painting, I want to use a cold blue coloured light directed from the right as the main light source, and green values as ambient, which will show in shadowed areas and in backlight from back left.

Since I need easy access to a pre-made skin tone palette, I make a new layer where I include a range of colours needed for shading the basic values of the skin, from the brightest to the darkest. Try blending the values together to see if it works well, and remember: skin tones are usually darker than you think.



Adding base colours to the sketch

At this stage, I make sure I have the sketch layer selected, then change the brush mode to Colour and the flow to 5-10 per cent. I also turn on the Lock Transparent Pixels feature in the Layers menu.

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Using the Eyedropper tool by holding down the Alt key (or Option on a Mac), I pick the brightest skin colour from the skin tone palette I've made, and apply this colour to the brightest areas of the face. I do this on all the different skin tones, and add rough base colours for clothes, hair, eyes, etc. At this stage, the colours usually look a bit off, but this doesn't matter, since all you should be concerned with is establishing a good base to start off with.







In depth Digital fantasy portraits



Rendering the skin properly

Rendering the skin properly usually means a lot of work: painting over everything you've done dozens of times, and mixing lots of colours. Before I start, I make a new layer on top of the character, in case I do something silly that messes it all up later on. Then I change my brush back to Normal mode, and start to render the skin properly in a painstaking step-by-step fashion. The rewards are truly worth it, though.

What is really important at this stage is to mix colours, and to avoid monochrome palettes. You may prefer mixing colours on the side of where you are painting, but I prefer mixing directly where I paint. An example: In the area where the bright skin colour meets the dark green skin, I paint a translucent brush stroke with the bright skin colour over the dark area, then I use the Eyedropper tool [Alt] and pick the new value I create there.

If I need some purple or blue hue around the eyes, I make a blue colour, paint a translucent brush stroke on top of the skin colour, and colour pick this new value. Remember to look closely at the reference photo and try and sort out the different colour values of the different kinds of skin variants.

Adding foreground elements

The hand is made in a new layer on top of the character, and I feel that now's the time to use the grid again to aid me with proportions. The bat is something that I paint freehand after looking at several pictures of bats for inspiration. I now add colours using the same procedures detailed in step 7.

Brushing up and adding details

Things are really starting to take shape now aren't they? Here, I add some proper colours to the bat and the hand, and render some semi-detailed fur on the bat. The guy's outfit is also in need of a few extra details and some better shading, so I attend to that.

Embossed details

A nice way of adding detail to everything from wrinkles to cracks and textures in stone, is to make a layer with a Bevel and Emboss layer style:

- 1) Make a new layer, set the layer to Multiply.
- 2) Add a Bevel and Emboss layer style, and set the depth slider to the centre, or a little more. Set direction to Down, Size to 1 per cent, Soften to 0 per cent, and set Angle to whatever direction you're using for the light in your scene.
 3) Use white colour on the hard-edged brush, and keep the flow around 5-15



per cent.





Making the background

Since this is a portrait, I want to use a simple background, and, after some experimenting, I end up with the one you can see. As I've experienced many times before, the simple solutions are usually -and thankfully! - best. For this background, I simply make a very rough and messy sketch of the inside of a cave. Try using a thin brush with a solid flow, and then paint in a dynamic and messy manner – it will creates some interesting details later on in the process. Of course, I make sure the main light source is directed from the right of the picture, giving the brightest areas a blue tint, and leaving the dark areas green.

At the end, I run a Gaussian blur filter, and I paint on some moody, green fog at the bottom. This will lighten up the picture slightly, and also give it some more depth.



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Done

Surprise your friend, and remember that you can get prints of your digital pictures on canvas so that it looks like a traditional painting. Have fun!

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PRO SECRETS

Slow down on details

but I've learned that spending decain syleat, spending too much time on them rarely yields the expected results. Instead of working zoomed all the way in, create some thin and more harsh brush strokes instead to show glints of highlights, and simple cross hatch shading will add texture to surfaces. It's all about giving the impression that things have details and surface, but it's not necessary to actually draw all the details.

Adding soft glow

At this point, the soft brush gets used for the first time. I add a soft glow to the brightest areas in the picture in a new layer. It's easy to take the glow effect too far, and my advice would be to leave it as subtle as possible. You shouldn't notice the glow, it should only be a natural part of the picture.

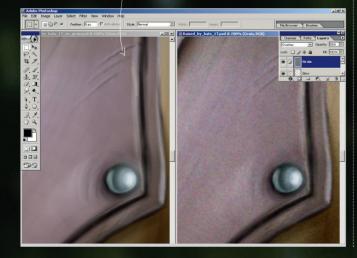
Wrapping up A trick to make paintings look less

computer-perfect is to add some grain to them. In Photoshop, follow these steps:

1) Make a new layer filled with the RBG-values: R:128, G:128, B:128.

- 2) Add a Noise filter, 400 per cent amount, and set the layer to Overlay blending mode.
- 3) Run the Brush Strokes>Spatter filter a couple of times.
- 4) Do a normal blur and set the layer Opacity to 5-10 per cent.

I also add a couple of overlay layers and mess around with some textured brushes to give the clothes more textures.











DVD Assets

and some painting in Photoshop. By Adam Benton rtists and authors have been

imagining fantastic scenes with all manner of mythical and mystical creatures and characters for aeons. The Victorians had a real love and fascination for fairies, and there are several notable artists of that period (such as Arthur Rackham, Arthur Hughes and Edward Hughes) whose work still provides inspiration.

Whether it is something of the child that remains in all of us, or the simple love of whimsy that many artists have, fairytale images are always popular with young and old alike. Their creation can

now be explored in more diverse ways than ever before using digital tools.

Inject magic into a woodland fairy scene, using Poser, Bryce

I have created a range of fairy images in the past, mainly due to my love of old craggy trees and woodland settings. I will demonstrate the approach, tools and reasoning used in the creation of this whimsical image. I am using e frontier's Poser (or try Daz Studio) and Daz Bryce. Photoshop is used for painting.

The focus of this tutorial is to explore setting up a small woodland setting in Bryce, and the use of specific, directed lighting and atmosphere to aid with the image's visual depth. The Poser elements

setup is not explored in detail, because this is something you can experiment with yourself for an individual look and approach. Please also refer to my tutorials in previous issues if you can, for information that is also applicable to some processes in this one.

Full size screen grabs are included on the DVD. I highly recommend you refer to these because you will have the benefit of full screen resolution, as well as many additional screens not shown in the printed article. There's also a selection of Daz models on the DVD for you to experiment with.





In depth Create a fairy woodland



Magic mushroom

The focus of this image is a daydreaming fairy sitting on top of a fly agaric mushroom in the foreground, so that should be the first thing to set up and create. I will build the other scene elements around her. I start by loading the figure content, (there are a few on your DVD), into Poser or Daz Studio. Starting with the figure (I've opted for Aiko 3 – you can buy this from www. daz3d.com), I now add the fairy wings, texture, hair and so on, to the base figure.



Strike a pose

Once the various additions are attached to my figure, she is ready to pose. If you can find a pose in the library that is suitable, use it. Even if it's not completely right for what you want, it may get you halfway there, then you'll only need minor adjustments to achieve the desired position for your image. I have started this way and have tweaked the limbs to better suit the object they are resting on. Once you roughly have what you want, load in a mushroom object (there are a number of these on your free ImagineFX DVD), and make subtle adjustments to the fairy pose and position to fit the mushroom cap.

Load your props If you are using Daz|Studio, the connection with Bryce 5.5 is efficient, enabling items to be imported and remain linked to the original for additional tweaking later on. From Bryce you click on the big [S] button in the





Create palette - this opens Studio. With this app, you load in the elements you wish to use in your Bryce scene (figures, props etc), then select Return to Bryce. All your selected props and figures will be loaded immediately. If you're using Poser, the figures should be exported as Wavefront Objects and imported into Bryce that way.

Use models

Now I have my foreground figure in Bryce, I need to tweak her textures. Firstly, to make things easier, I group the parts of the mesh that share the same textures - head, body, clothes, the mushroom and so on. All these elements use a particular texture map. By grouping them at the beginning I can easily go in and change all texture settings on one particular part later on, without needing to keep multi-selecting limbs and so on.

Start by clicking on the Select Options down arrow. Go through the list, and Shift+Click each related body part, Once all these are selected (red in the viewport), click the little [G] to group them, and be sure to click [A] next to the group to name it 'Body'. To make this task a little easier, once you have created



your first group, go back to the Selection Options, and choose Select Inverse. Now click Solo Selection to leave only the meshes still needing to be grouped in your selection list. Now do the same with the head, clothes, wings and mushroom.

Light and reflection

I select each group in turn, and edit the material settings. Click the little [M] next to the group. I always like to use the Ambience channel in my Bryce materials, to stop them from looking totally black in non-lit areas, which is obviously unnatural, as there is always some bounced/reflected light present in all but the darkest of night scenes. Higher-end



3D applications can use 'Radiosity or GI' to calculate real reflected light and ambience, but in Bryce we have to suggest it. I also check the specularity settings and experiment to get a subtle sheen to the skin.

Sky settings
I begin to adjust the sky settings, and decide to set up her lights straight away. First thing to do is to turn off the sun, since I want to have total localised control of the lighting in this scene. I start with the light source that I want to focus on her, which is going to emulate the sun. For this I use a parallel spot, placed to the mid right. I am emulating a sunset, so the light colour wants to have a yellow/orange tint, and be positioned fairly low in the sky. To make sure the light is always pointing at the fairy, I click on the [A] next to the light, and link it to something central in her mesh.



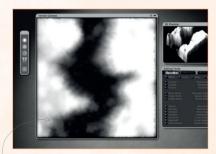






Highlights

I add two spotlights. One (pale peach/yellow) is linked to her face, and positioned to her lower left, to highlight her features. The second (red) is placed below her, to the left. This one simulates reflected light from the mushroom. Shadows need to be deactivated on this, so the light passes through the mushroom mesh. I don't want to make the intensity of the main light source too high, as I will be adding other scene lights to illuminate her. By adding these lights now, I can be sure she stands out.



The environment

Sometimes I build the environment in a new document, then merge the elements together later, but here I am building the environment around the fairy. I am fairly sure of the final composition, so I will only create what the camera can see from this viewpoint - only building what I need. I start with the ground terrain. For larger scenes, I often create a number of terrain objects, and layer and mix them together but in this scene I am using just one, as we won't see too much of it. I start with a new terrain object (Create palette) and click on the [E] to edit the default terrain. I clear the existing data and use the tools (left of the Terrain Canvas) to paint a relatively flat plane, with a deeper stream

Quick switch
Esc
in Bryce, this closes your current editor and performs a quick switch between the wireframe and recently rendered



Image sources

If you are aiming for realism, or at least convincing detail in your woodland scenes, photographic textures are essential. You can buy these online from a few sources (try my Renderosity store). If you like to get out in the countryside and have a suitable camera, you can obviously collect and create your own samples. Digital cameras offer the quickest solution, because you can dump your images straight into Photoshop, and start editing them into seamless texture





bed. Then by experimenting with the Elevation controls (Eroded, Mounds etc) I add variation and interest. Back in the main viewport, the terrain scale needs lowering in the Y axis, to flatten the depth. You might want to turn the sun back on while doing this!

Materials layers

Bryce can layer materials relative to their height placement on an object. This is useful for snowy mountain peaks, for example. I will use this method to mix photographic texture maps + a muddy/leafy map in the lower areas such as the stream bed and slopes, and a mossy grass. This can definitely take a bit of trial and error to get the height placement of each texture right, but it gives great results. The moss texture (channel A) is the highest, and its blend with the lower leaves one (channel B) is controlled by the third 'Altitude' material in the C channel. I add a flat plane object and create a water material for it to simulate a stream.

Tree choices

Bryce has its own trees, but they aren't any good for close up detail. In the Daz content provided on your free DVD, there is a highly detailed tree trunk model I created for them previously, which is perfect for our close-up 'hero' tree. Another method I devised prior to creating that tree



model, was to use Bryce's Lattice object to make simple, but effective trunks. The Lattice object works in the same way that greyscale information is used on a Terrain object, except that it has a front and back or top and bottom, which is one side mirrored.

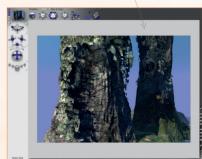


Tree creation

Both trees' greyscale maps were created in Photoshop, with different approaches and results. The first was an invented shape, painted in tones of grey against a black background. The Noise filter was applied, and direction blurred to create bark. The second shape was derived from a photo of an interesting tree trunk which I then painted to emphasise its form. Both methods offer convincing results. With the first method you can apply seamless bark textures for varying results. Method two gives a photo-real 3D depiction of a real tree with individual flaws and features.

Textures

The 'hero' tree high poly model and high-res texture map can be imported from Daz|Studio (it's on your DVD) and placed directly in the scene. I use two copies of the trunk in this scene. The rear one has the default texture map, with moss climbing from the roots. The foreground one has a more gnarly map available from my Renderosity store. It has ivy, to add realism. I have arranged the trees around my set. I turn off the sun and start applying spotlights.







In depth Create a fairy woodland



Sunset

I'm aiming for lighting that's just before sunset, so I need a low and orange tinted light. I want this light to come from the same direction as the Parallel light on the fairy, so the shadows match up. I duplicate this light and use a very useful tool, which converts your selected object to another. In this case I want to change the Parallel light to a spot. I click [E] to edit the new spot's settings, and make the colour slightly more orange. To add further realism, I add a 'gel' to the light. This is again akin to theatre lighting, as it involves applying a texture or mask, which is placed in front of the light's rays, and casts interesting shadows on our subject. In this case, I have used a seamless greyscale texture of leaves, which is slightly blurred in Photoshop. This can be edited by then clicking on the [M] (material editor) and altering the way the gel is mapped, and its scale (how large or small the leaves shadows appear to be on the scene). I make alterations and frequent test renders until it looks right.

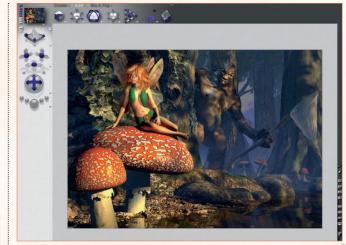


Fairy focus

I make the fairy visible again and test how the scene is shaping up from the viewpoint I want to use. From this position, I adjust the placement and scale of the trees to get the desired composition. The additional lighting is doing a good job of accenting the tree trunks and terrain, as well as adding a boost of colour and intensity to the fairy. Note how the fairy stands out and above the other elements because of the lighting steps that I took at the beginning.

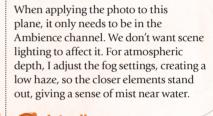
Foreground

I obviously need some foreground terrain that the mushroom can be growing from, so I create another Terrain object, and click [E] to edit it. I use the same dry leaf/mud texture to create height detail, and give the impression of real peaks and troughs. With this texture applied to the terrain, I go to the Material Editor and apply the same texture to colour it. When this is angled slightly into the water plane, we get a much more natural and broken water line and terrain.



Scene details

I import some rock objects from Poser/Studio, and place them along the shoreline. I import another version of the agaric mushroom and add duplicates, for scale and distance perception. The background needs darkening and breaking up a bit, so I use one Bryce tree, positioned behind my lattice trunks. Finally, for the far background, as I don't want to add lots more trees, I employ another theatrical trick - a flat backdrop. I use a library photograph of a sky and distant tree line. You could use a photo of a woodland; remember to use one that's lit similarly, or doesn't conflict too obviously with the 3D lighting. The backdrop is a simple rectangular plane object, scaled to fit the blank area, and placed parallel to the viewpoint.



The scene is complete, apart from one final quirk – a troll with a large butterfly net. I model the net in another 3D application, import it into Poser, and

3D application, import it into Poser, and position it in the troll's hands, before importing it all into Bryce in the same manner as the fairy. I add another spotlight (tinted cool blue) to the upper left of the troll, to add colour and 'temperature' contrast. This helps the troll blend in with the hazy blue background, so he is hopefully not noticed instantly.

Photoshop tweaks

After doing my final highresolution render, I load the image into
Photoshop, do some touch ups of any
mesh errors and soften shadows on the
skin with the Smudge tool, accenting
highlights and shadows with the Dodge
and Burn tools. I add blades of grass with
the airbrush. Final touches include
creating a darkened vignette border to
subtly frame the image and Gaussian
noise to blend the image nicely.











In depth Painting satin gowns



Create a character

of an already painted character, so create a figure first or open up a file with your character. Create a new layer on top of it and, after choosing any brush you like and a colour (preferably contrasting with the background) sketch the basic look of your gown. When designing the drapery, remember to vary the size and shape of folds to make them look more interesting.

Layer and light

Create a layer on top of the sketch and mark the convexity of the folds (red lines). In draped dresses, the most convex areas are the tops of the folds and the edges of their curvature. Since the material has thickness and stiffness, the edges are thick as well, so mark this on your sketch, too.

Now, choose a light source. It's easier to shade when the lighting point is between the side and the front of your character, as in this setting. The most convex areas are also the most highlighted. Create another layer on top of the convexity and sketch the highlights (light transparent shapes). Now, paint some shadows (violet shapes). These are usually between and under the most convex areas. If you have chosen the light source to be at the side, remember that the opposite part has to be darker.



PRO SECRETS Understanding

textiles

If you are a beginner, find an easy sort of textile to start painting (say, a table-cloth) and experiment with different draping and lighting to understand the structure of the folds. If needed, take some reference photos to learn from later, but remember that drawing from nature

is much more educating.



Defining shapes
It is now time to finalize the design of your drapery.

Create a new layer under the sketch. Now, according to the convexity and lighting you designed, push the sketch further, marking the general thickness of the folds and defining their shapes. Keep the light source in mind all the time, making the right parts of the dress respectively darker. When ready, put on some colours that you want to use for the dress.

Brush choices

Now start applying colours. Create a new layer below the first sketch, but above the one from the previous step.

Using both sketches and your colour palette as a reference, block out some basic colours for your gown. It's really important what tool you use; avoid airbrushes – they would disturb creating a nice texture. Instead, pick something that has rough edges, like the Basic Round brush from Tinting in Painter, or a Hard Round in Photoshop. Use those brushes at mediocre opacity (40-60 per cent), to give the colours a chance to blend.



5 Blending colours

Now, let's focus on the lower part of the dress. First, blend the difference between the heights and depths of the folds. If you own Painter, use a Blender tool, in Photoshop, simply apply a low opacity Hard Round brush on top of the contrasting areas repeatedly. Do not use any kinds of Smear/Smudge tools,

as they will only take away the texture we are trying to create.

Remember to work on enriching the colour palette – shading with a hue different than your midtone (for example, shading a blue dress with violet or green) will dramatically improve the look of your gown. For this, use an opaque (5-10 per cent) brush (your current tool or an airbrush). Remember that after applying colours of another hue, you should blend them in immediately to make the hue transition look natural.

Soften the folds

Continue blending the folds until the transition between all the colours seems quite smooth. In addition to the Basic Round/Hard Round, you can also apply some opaque strokes with an Airbrush/Soft Brush. Photoshoppers can also blend with a Spackled Brush that's made out of many small dots.

Since satin is not a stiff textile, most of the freefall folds won't be as straight as marked on the sketch. Break the 'belly' of each fold by darkening some areas or making discontinuous highlights. It's easier to add finishing retouches after having the full context, so let's move on...



Highlights and shadow For the draped part of the dress,

concentrate on making the difference between highlights and shadows more subtle. If the material is draped, you achieve this effect by lightening the dark areas and adding some shadows to the highlighted folds, instead of blending the transitions between light and dark.





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SECRETS

Usina tool shortcuts

Using shortcuts during painting will dramatically improve your workflow. If you often switch between tools during painting, it's sometimes faster to use keyboard shortcuts: [B] for brush. [E] for eraser and so on, rather than choosing them from the tool menu.

If you own a Wacom Intuos 3, you'll be given a bunch of function keys on the sides of the tablet. They grant you fast access to any function you specify. With a single click you will be able to choose a brush, undo your move or enter a specific menu.

Shortcuts Free transform

Ctrl+T (PC) Command+T (Mac)

This handy little shortcut

enables you to quickly

change the selected

object's size.



Satin textures

Let's start working on the textures, to make the dress look like satin. You should keep in mind that in this textile, colour transitions are smooth but the transition zone must be very narrow. The highlights are thin but strong and have rather hard, well defined edges, directly surrounded by darker areas.

Keeping this in mind, add some subtle shadows around the convex areas, which make the edges of our highlights. Also, make the folds stronger by adding some shadows. I'd recommend the Basic Round brush for Painter owners, and a Hard Round tool for Photoshoppers.

Change colours Choose a colour of a different hue than your midtone and add highlights based on the convexity and lighting sketch you've made before. Remembering about the qualities of satin, add a highlight with a brush with well-defined edges (Smooth Ink Pen or Basic Round from Painter; Hard Round or alike from Photoshop). Don't use pure white or pure gray for shading, as those tend to give an artificial look. If you make some shadows very dark, they give an impression of the fold being extremely curved.



Get blending

Remembering that the transitions should be thin but smooth, blend the colours with a Blender tool, if you've got Painter, or a very opaque (5-15 per cent) Hard Round, if you use Photoshop. Continue detailing the many folds by giving them some additional highlights and shadows.

Enrich the colour palette by breaking the existing colours with other hues. Also, avoid keeping too many layers at a time by merging them often.



And again...

More of the same! Just continue blending the same way as before till the colour transitions feel quite smooth. Try to differentiate the shadows. The shade which separates the convex and highlighted areas should be the lightest; the shadow on the folds which fade into darkness should be of mediocre intensity and a hue similar to the background colour; whereas the shadow below the fold should be darkest.



Finish the folds

Create a separate layer for this, so that you can erase the changes any time you want. Keep on blending until the colour transitions are smooth, working on highlights and shadows at the same time. Differ the seeming 'edges' formed by the curve of the material and its real border (central left). The former ones should have a smooth transition from shadows to highlights, while the latter

should have a rough edge separating the dark from the light. The borders of textile are sewn to prevent ripping of the thread, therefore the edges of the material are thicker than the fabric itself. Therefore, make a thin highlighting stroke with an airbrush tool, along those edges.

Time for the corset tet's move our attention to the upper part of the dress. In a new layer, sketch the corset with a Basic Round (Painter), or a Hard Round (Photoshop). Apply subtle highlights and shadows according to the lighting sketch. Remembering about various types of shadows, make the corset fade into darkness while making the breasts cast their own shadow as well.



(

A little lace
If you're dividing the corset into panels, remember that the panel edges should be highlighted and cast a small shadow as well. Using the Basic Round/ Hard Round, add shadows at both sides of the corset and enrich its colour palette. In Photoshop, you can use the hard round shaped dodge tool (set to Highlights mode) to add sharp highlights to the material. Remember to keep it subtle. Also, blend the colours with Blender/Spackled Round. Once the corset is looking right, create a new layer on top of it. Choose a small Fine Point brush in Painter or Hard Round in Photoshop and sketch out your lace pattern. The design is your choice, but keep it logical, clean and detailed.







In depth Painting satin gowns



Now fill the design with a colour you made the outlines with. Create a new layer and design the embroidery on the corset the same way as lace.



Thread by thread
The lace looks too dark and bulky,
so give it a slight transparency (90 per
cent opacity) and with the eraser tool
selected make some holes of different
sizes and shapes in the dark parts.

As for embroidery, you should paint it the way it is sewn: thread by thread. Select the Fine Point/Hard Round tool of a 1 pixel diameter. You might have to zoom to around 400 per cent of the image size to have a good view of what you're doing.

With the brush, make dozens of short lines of similar length, placed next to each other, so they form a kind of outline along the bigger shapes of your design.



Now duplicate the lace layer. Leave the original layer untouched, but change

the opacity of the copied layer to around 10-20 per cent and move it a bit to one side. This nifty little trick will make your lace design appear fuller, while not affecting its subtlety.

Continue painting the embroidery: With the same 1-pixel brush run all over the empty areas between the outline, making a tight zigzag pattern.

It is crucial that your lines be systematic: They should be somewhat parallel and placed next to each other, without any gaps. Their beginnings and ends cannot overlap the outline you made before. They can also be slightly bent to underline the thickness of the embroidery.

Now, select a lighter colour from the palette and with the same brush apply more bits of thread, making the same zigzag pattern to the filling of the embroidery as well as the outline. You can make the highlights a bit stronger at the edges which are more highlighted.



Now, to finish the embroidery, enlarge the brush to around 2 pixels and change its opacity to 50 per cent. Use a light colour on top of the most highlighted areas, especially the edges of the filling embroidery, and a dark shade on the opposite sides.



Lace is often made out of designs set on a tiny net. Therefore, to finish it, create a new layer on top of the present one, choose a 1-1.5 pixel airbrush of the lace colour and run across the whole lace carefully making first horizontal, then vertical lines.

Your final image
Now it's time to finish your image.
Add a suitable background to give your character some context. To enrich the dress design, add some elements which correspond with the dress itself (I've gone for a lace glove) as well as the background (the feather collar).









(A)







Quick technique Colouring comic art

Separate colours The first stage in colouring for me and almost every other professional colourist I know of, is what we call "flatting". This is often a job that we give to assistants who don't mind the menial tasks that our creative egos cannot stand, and I'm no exception. The idea behind this is that you paint in areas of colour that correspond to the spaces/areas that you wish to be separate in the illustration, ie, clothing, hair or skin, etc. Using the Magic Wand tool, you select the areas in the line art (on the top layer) that you wish to fill, then create a new layer beneath that one and fill with a colour. The colour itself isn't so important, as this will change later. What's really important is that you lock that layer so that the area of flat colour can be painted over easily. You do this for the whole image, grouping areas of flats onto their own layers such as "skin" or "background"

Palance it right
Now I have to decide the overall colour scheme. This is usually achieved by eye-balling a colour in the swatches and just filling that layer with it, though you can also use the hue/saturation function for subtle tweaking. It's important here to get the tonal balance right, even though you can alter it later it's crucial to bear in mind that painting with colour is a contextual experience, where each element of the image affects

or "bike bits".





Painting shadows
Having chosen basic colours, the next step is to pick an area of flat colour and start painting the shadows/ highlights in. I tend to start with the shadows and do this for all the image and then add the light later, but this is by no means a hard and fast rule. Here you'll find the benefits of locking each layer, as you can paint swiftly and loosely over the area without worrying about bleeding over the edge.

Highlights
The next stage I go to is the highlights. Sometimes I like to paint highlights on a new layer that sits above the rest as the highlights can sometimes be quite minimal yet often need noodling and fixing, and I find it easier to do that on a new layer.



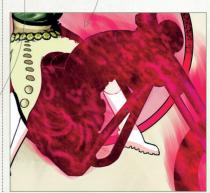
Scanning
It's now time to get involved with some scanned elements. I have many watercolour textures that I use for this kind of art, and I apply it in the same way I do with flat colour. The texture is pasted behind the line art and its hue/tonality is modified until I like it.



Obodge/Burn
Using the Dodge/Burn tools, I
paint into the fill, making the most of
the textures inherent in it. Seeing as it's a
flaming bike, the effect works quite well
and sets off the flatter/smoother textures
of the rest of the image quite nicely.

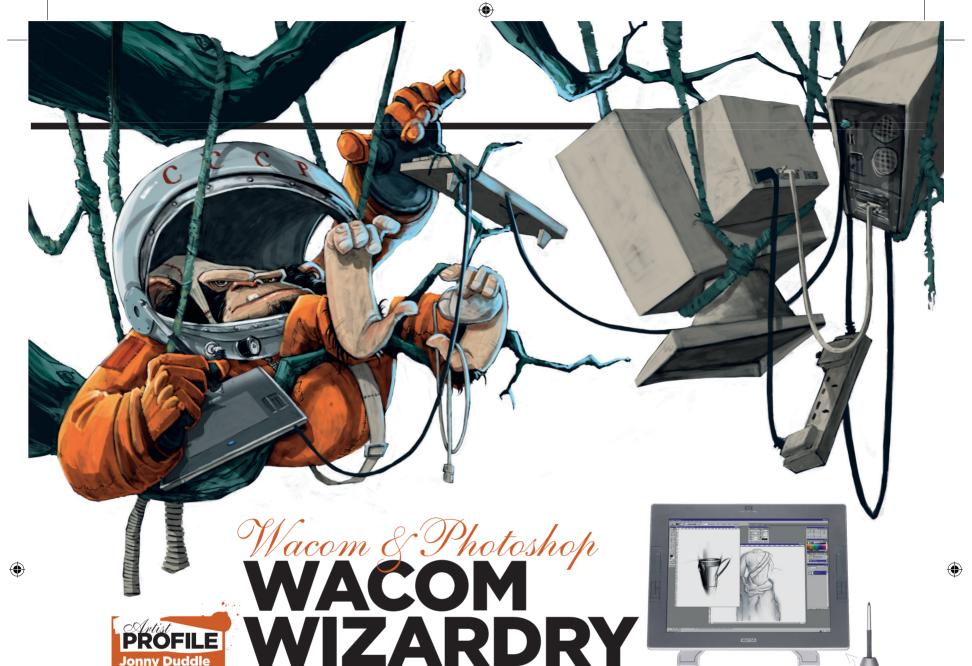


Adding depth
A final layer is added above all the others where I can paint special effects such as fire over the line art as well. This adds depth to the image and helps to give it that painterly edge that we all seem to want from comic art these days. The image is then flattened, converted to CYMK and sent off to be printed.



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Get more from your Wacom drawing tablet with **Jonny Duddle's** top 20 golden nuggets of advice on setting up and using them...

trained as an illustrator in the early nineties, when computers were slow and expensive and Photoshop didn't have a History palette. Most of my work was drawn with a dip pen and coloured with ink and watercolour washes.

I bought my first Apple Mac in 1998 with a copy of Photoshop 5. I was hooked, instantly. I could experiment with drawings and paintings without wasting a fortune on heavy watercolour paper and inks! I no longer had to lean over the bath, stretching watercolour paper onto big slabs of plywood. What's more, I didn't have to start a picture all over again because my Gillot nib had splurged ink across my carefully rendered line work.

It was a revelation. But I found the mouse cumbersome and restricting. So I looked for an alternative and a friend told me to try a Wacom. I bought a beige A6 Artpad II for £60 and was flabbergasted. I had all the control of a pen, but on my computer. It was so much more intuitive than my mouse and much cleaner than my dip pen and Sable brushes. Tablets have come a long way since 1998, but they still perform the same job. They make the task of creating art on a computer feel more natural. The following tips give some pointers to setting up and using a Wacom. Most of this advice is not specific to any particular model, because I've used most models since the Artpad II. Most application-specific tips apply to Photoshop.

1 HORSES FOR COURSES

Choose the tablet for you - they come in all shapes and sizes. They range in price from about £50 for an A6 Graphire, to £2,000+ for the Cintig 21UX. If possible, I'd recommend trying the various sizes before buying. I know a few people who went straight out and bought A4 or bigger Wacoms and then realised they didn't have enough desk space, or that they felt that they were swinging their arm about too much on the larger tablet. My own favourite size tablet is A5. But I used my Artpad II for several years and only changed model when my G3 Mac died and I needed a USB connection for my new Windows laptop. I bought an A6 Intuos 2. You don't need to spend a fortune to benefit from a Wacom.



Jonny Duddle country: UK CLIENTS: Sony, Crave,

illustrator in the games

art teacher. He relies on

nis trusty Wacom tablet



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Artist's tips Wacom wizardry

2 DESK SPACE

3 DRAWING ROOM

Comfort and arm room are important.

I like to have room for my drawing arm.

There's nothing more irritating than an obstructed drawing arm. Keep the

space free around your tablet and give

can draw at that awkward angle. Allow

the tablet plenty of desk space for when you want to turn it, so that you

your forearm space to swing about.

Arrange your workspace: A poorly arranged workspace can put all sorts of **strains** on your body and won't help you get work done efficiently. One of the great things about a tablet is that you use a pen instead of your mouse, which is much less likely to lead to problems with your hands and wrist. But it's still important to get set up correctly with a supportive chair and a desk at a height which enables you to keep your forearms horizontal.



66 Consider changes to the settings that could improve vour workflow



4 KEYBOARD POSITION

Even if you have an Intuos 3 with its touch strips and function keys, you will still need to use your keyboard for shortcuts. Make sure you can reach the keyboard without stretching. The position of your keyboard and Wacom will probably evolve with use, but always keep it comfortable to avoid any risk of repetitive strain injury.

5 SETTING-UP A WACOM

Setting up and installing Wacom software is straightforward, whatever model you own. It's worth reading through the online help and getting familiar with the various settings. Have Photoshop open (or Painter, if preferred) if you make changes to the default Wacom settings, so you can see how the changes affect your brushstrokes.



6 MAPPING TO DUAL MONITORS

Dual monitors radically alter the shape of your desktop. By default, a Wacom will map across both monitors, which means a diagonal line you draw on the Wacom will be at a different angle on screen. You can set the mapping to just one monitor, but you'll have to use your mouse on your second monitor. I used to map my A5 Wacom to take in the first portion of my second display so that I could put my Photoshop palettes up against the edge of the screen on my second monitor.

7 CUSTOMISED WACOM SETTINGS

The default settings on a Wacom are pretty intuitive and work well for most people. Set your tip feel to your liking, because people draw differently, whether it's on paper or digitally. And as you familiarise yourself with the Wacom stylus and tablet, consider changes to the settings that could improve your workflow. The Wacom menu can be found in your System Preferences on a Mac or in the Control Panel in Windows.

8 STYLUS BUTTONS

The Wacom stylus has a button along its body. I think these are right-click and left-click by default. For Photoshop I find right-click incredibly useful for picking brushes as I'm painting. I've also experimented with mapping the Eyedropper tool to the other button for picking colours quickly while painting.

9 DOUBLE-CLICK

Set the speed of your double-click in the Wacom menu. It can be infuriating if this is set wrong, especially if you use your Wacom almost exclusively instead of your mouse. Make sure the speed feels fluid and natural.

10 WHAT DO YOU DO?

Before changing all the settings, spend time assessing your workflow and identify the tasks, buttons and shortcuts you use the most. I recently upgraded from an A6 Intuos 2 to a Cintig 21UX and spent the first few weeks constantly changing what I assigned to my function keys and touch strips.

11 FUNCTION KEYS

The Function keys on an Intuos 3 can be useful for shortcuts and especially for common tasks with awkward multiple key shortcuts. I have my Function keys set up for Free Transform, Hue/Saturation, Levels, Colour Balance and Fill. I use these menu items in Photoshop regularly. Mapping them to the Function keys saves opening drop-down menus.

12 TOUCH STRIPS

These are good fun. But I've disabled the touch arm. I use the other touch strip for brush of resizing the brush tip without tapping away at the [and] keys. If I want to be more precise, I use Stylus button to set on the brush pop-up.



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UNI03.tablet_tips 85

>> 13 OPACITY

This is the Wacom's biggest strength. Using pen pressure to control opacity gives **complete control** to the **artist**. In Photoshop, opacity is set in Other Dynamics in the Brushes palette, by setting Opacity Jitter Control to Pen Pressure. In Painter, opacity can be set in the General tab in the Brush Creator, by setting the Opacity Expression to Pressure.



14 BRUSH TIP SIZE

Using pressure to control brush size can also give a natural feel to brushes in Photoshop and Painter. This can be useful for inking line work, for instance. Working with tip size set to Pen Pressure and Opacity set to 100 per cent can give a good inked look for

A Wacom tablet gives the freedom to draw, scribble and paint in a much more natural way





15 THE ERASER

The eraser has always eluded me. I know it's there, but never use it. I find that if my hand is hovering over the keyboard (and it usually is, even with Function keys and touch strips), I prefer to use [E] and the more precise end of my stylus to erase. I keep meaning to assign it to something completely different... such as Save, perhaps?

16 TILT

I've got to be honest and say I haven't used tilt to any great degree. I know that tilt is effective in Painter and I've played around with it a little. Basically, the angle and tilt of the stylus affects the mark made by the brush. This can give a whole new level of real world control. Try it, because it's good fun.

17 NIBS

Wacom provides several nibs with the current generation of tablet. These nibs don't affect the mark made, but affect the way it feels making the mark. Try them out. I stick to the default nibs because lots of spares are supplied. Once your nib starts to look more pointed or has flat edges, consider changing it for a spare, to avoid scratching the tablet's surface.

18 APPLICATION-SPECIFIC SETTINGS

Most of my tips have made more mention of Photoshop than Painter or other applications. I know people who use a Wacom for working in Maya or 3ds max. Whatever package you use, you can have different settings for each by using application-specific settings. This can be very useful if you have different shortcuts in Painter than in Photoshop and want to apply some of these to your function keys, for instance.



19 WACOMS **AND LAPTOPS**

Although I've upgraded the Wacom tablet I use with my desktop machine, I still use my A6 Intuos 2 with my laptop. A small Wacom and a laptop enable an artist to paint pretty much anywhere. I've managed to draw from observation in bars and cafes with this set up. It's not quite as easy or flexible as a sketchbook and pencil, but almost...

20 FREEDO

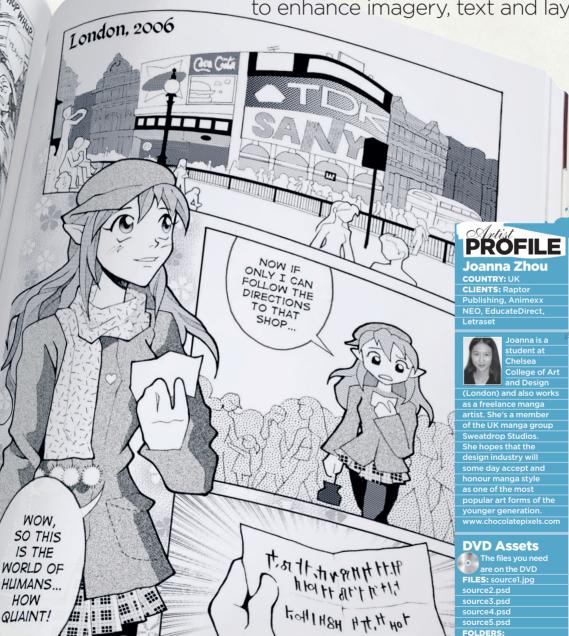
A Wacom tablet gives the freedom to draw, scribble and paint in a much more natural way than a mouse ever could. A computer gives you the freedom to experiment with different paint packages without wasting cash on paper, inks and paint. So there's no excuse not to experiment and have fun!



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HOW TO CREATE AMANGA PAGE

Learn the basics of page composition and use digital techniques to enhance imagery, text and layout. By **Joanna Zhou**



he increasing use of digital equipment and graphics software has enabled manga artists to cut corners on time and money. Traditionally, mangas are drawn on A3 size paper which requires a correspondingly huge amount of ink and screentone. Paper size is a frequently underestimated factor when determining how professional the final manga will look. Mangas drawn on a smaller scale may suffer from scruffy line art and lack detail.

This tutorial uses Photoshop to create the illusion of a large scene while keeping the pages to a manageable A4 size. It also shows how to make full use of layers to arrange screentone, text, speech bubbles and sound effects. Being able to edit these elements individually gives you a degree of flexibility that can boost the final layout and narrative.

An important issue to consider with manga creation is that pages should not look like they have been digitally put together. Software is there to enhance the visual appeal of the final page, but not to intrude on its content. Bad examples of digital editing would include using a symbol hose, light flare effects, none-halftone gradients and too many perfectly rounded, thickly stroked speech bubbles.

Stylistic conventions such as panelling and speech bubbles differ a lot from artist to artist. The best way to find a style that suits you is to examine the visual language of your favourite manga. Deconstruct the pages to see how the artist uses panels, camera angles, text and narrative speed, and try to incorporate similar features into your own work.

Before you begin drawing, it's really important to create a detailed script and thumbnail sketches, and to decide on your exact page measurements.

SOFTWARE:



Quick technique How to create a manga page



Prep work

Consider your page measurements carefully (safe, bleed, crop etc). The page size you draw on should be as large as possible to ensure maximum detail. You can multiply the height and width of the final print size (roughly A5, but it varies depending on publisher) by a fixed number (such as 1.5). This will give you a proportional yet larger area to work on. In this example, I draw everything on A4, scaleable to a smaller 15x22cm. For the opening panorama, I enlarge the panel proportionally (on a separate piece of paper) to create a more detailed scene.

Speech flow

Another thing to bear in mind when laying out a page is the panel flow. Make sure the reader will see the panels and speech bubbles in the right order. Since this is the opening of my manga, I want to introduce the context and characters. Text (or an opening narrative) is useful for setting the geographical and historical location. Unless the storyline dictates otherwise, every new character should be presented in a full-body shot, as the focal point of the page. This enables you to communicate the important elements of their personality through clothing, expression, body language and speech.



Magic Wand

Here's an advanced toning technique. As Computones works using selections it can be frustrating when you want to tone an 'open area' that is not completely enclosed in black. Create a copy of your page using Duplicate Layer, then use a thin black paintbrush to outline in the areas you want toned. Grab these areas with the Magic Wand and apply the Tone filter on a new layer. The shadows on the jacket, hair and scarf were done this way Finally, just discard the duplicate laver



Contrast

After inking and scanning, I adjust the Levels in Photoshop to create the optimum contrast. Now I can copy and paste my city scene into the original page. I reduce the opacity so I can see both layers and use Shift and Transform to scale the image to the size of the panel. When the outlines are in place, I reduce the page to the print size – before toning. This is important because scaling down a page after toning may result in dreaded moiré patterns, where screentone forms unsightly checkers, grids or swirls.

I choose the screentone plug-in, Computones 2. It's a good-value toning program for beginners, offering a wide



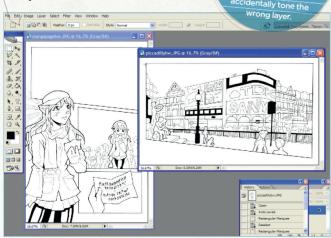
range of patterns (Windows only). It costs £15 with any How to Draw Manga: Computones book. Keep tone (and adjacent areas of tone) on different layers to enable easy editing. I select an area with the magic wand from Background, click on a new Tone layer and apply the plug-in filter. Alternatively, I can choose an area with the Polygonal Lasso, tone it and use the Eraser on any excess.

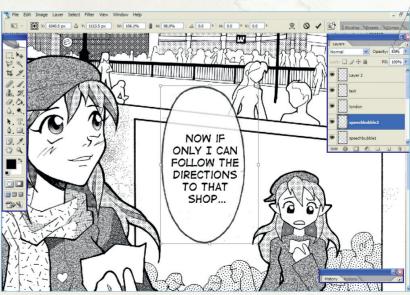
Speech fonts

The speech bubbles are inserted separately because they can be resized to fit the text. For convenience you can draw the bubbles straight onto the page but you may end up having a bubble that's too small for the text, or vice versa. I don't like using the Ellipse tool to create speech bubbles because they appear too perfect and clash with the hand-drawn feel of manga. When adding text, try something other than Comic Sans – www.dafont.com and www.blambot. com are great for free, comic-style fonts.

Resolution

As a finishing touch, I resize the speech bubbles to frame the text. The final format should be a 300 DPI or 600 DPI bitmapped TIFF (but make sure you keep a copy of your PSD file). A popular misconception is to save manga files as greyscale, which is not the same as bitmap. Bitmap only supports black and white, which produces a much crisper image when printed. Stylistically, manga is designed for bitmap because the whole purpose of screentone is to create shades of grey, using black and white dots only.





Photoshop TALE JSTRATION

Create an illustration for a classic fairv tale such as Little Red Riding Hood. By **Jonny Duddle**

Jonny Duddle CLIENTS: Buena Vista,

PROFILE

Universal, Crave, Sony



After stints as a painter. children's

entertainer, square ric sailor and art teacher. Jonny became a games industry concept artist He loves a good story www.duddlebug.co.uk

DVD Assets

The files you need are on the DVD

RedRidingHood_Final.psd RedRidingHood 01.tit RedRidingHood_02.tif RedRidingHood 03.tif RedRidingHood 04.tif SOFTWARE:

n this workshop I'm going to produce an illustration for Little Red Riding Hood, by the Brothers Grimm. A lot of commissioned fantasy art is based on existing characters, ideas or stories. Fairy tales have their roots in an oral tradition, which goes back for centuries, and many of these tales form the basis of modern fantasy, whether it's giants, goblins, elves or big bad wolves. Many originate in medieval times as warning tales for children and young adults, and it's fascinating to research their history.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm searched for traditional stories in their native Germany and other European countries. Their story of Little Red Cap was based on an existing tale by Charles Perrault, a French storyteller who knew this cautionary tale from rural societies in

the south of France. Little Red Riding Hood warned girls to beware of metaphorical wolves, particularly in the bedroom. The Brothers Grimm reworked the tale to include a woodsman, who saves Little Red Riding Hood and her Grandma from the wolf's belly.

Most fairy tales have been illustrated many times in the past, so there are many illustrations to inspire an artist. Little Red Riding Hood has been portrayed by incredible illustrators such as Arthur Rackham, Gustav Dore and, more recently, Scott Gustafson. This could be intimidating but, no matter how many times a tale has been illustrated, there is always a new twist or personal vision that can be created.

In this workshop, I'm going to produce an illustration in a children's book format with some accompanying text.



Read the story!

This must be your first step in illustrating any text. Even if you think you're familiar with the tale, it's worth reading a text again. A fairy tale is usually an easy read and relatively concise. Everyone has some knowledge of Little Red Riding Hood and probably some preconceptions based on their childhood memories. I started with Charles Perrault's version in a book of tales illustrated by one of my favourite illustrators, Edmund Dulac. It wasn't quite the story I remembered, so I moved on to a book of Grimm's Fairy Tales, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. This was much closer to the version I remembered, so I read it several times, over a few days, to get my creative juices flowing before approaching my Wacom.

Select a passage

Once I've re-acquainted myself with a story, it's time to choose a passage to illustrate. As I am working to a children's book format, I would normally be producing a series of illustrations. But for this workshop, I need to focus on one illustration. I choose a couple of favourite scenes which I shall visualise with thumbnail sketches

ldeas as thumbnails

approach most briefs with a series of thumbnails, either produced on paper or directly in Photoshop via my Wacom. Sometimes I do them while reading the text, but in this case I want to soak up the story first. I produce a few small digital thumbnails focusing on the

hortcuts Show Guides Command+[;] (Mac) CTRL+[;] (PC) This shortcut toggles your guides visibility on and off quickly and easily.

meeting in the woods between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, and her arrival at her Grandmother's house. My thumbnails are fast, loose and help me visualise ideas swirling around my head.

Developing line art After producing a few thumbnails, I begin to make choices that brings me to a









In depth Fairy tale illustration



rough composition. I'm looking for a sinister and foreboding feel to my illustration, while maintaining its suitability for children, so I plump for the arrival of Little Red Riding Hood at her Grandmother's house.

I want the Wolf to look like he is ready to pounce and devour the little girl, and I've decided to keep her at a distance so she looks isolated and vulnerable. I also think it would be nice to include a subtle shadow of the Wolf in mid pounce on the wall behind. The line art included all these elements in a quick tonal sketch. Another important consideration when producing an illustration that will span two pages is the fold in the page, so I create a guide to define the centre of the image and make sure there isn't any important detail in this area.



Allocate text space
Most illustrations, by definition,
will need to share a page with relevant
text. It's important that this text remains
clear and legible. In a children's book, the
text is often placed over the illustration.
It's important to allow adequate space for
the text. Ensure whatever part of the



illustration lies below the words doesn't interfere while reading. I make a clear space in the composition at this early stage, so that I know it's unnecessary to add any confusing detail in this area of the page. Guides can be useful for keeping text in position and defining space.

Base colours

Once I'm happy with the basic composition, it's time to block in some colour and begin thinking about the palette. I use big and chunky Photoshop brushes to paint base colours. I fill new layers with colour and play around with the layers' Blend modes to help find the look I'm after. I find the basic palette of the piece before I get lost in details.

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CMYK or RGB?

When producing an illustration for print it's important to consider the colour mode, so that the image on screen remains as close as possible to the final printed version. Printed work usually requires CMYK, while work for the web or on screen applications is usually produced in RGB. This can all be confusing, but it's well worth reading Photoshop's help files and other relevant articles to gain a better understanding of colour management. This illustration needs to be CMYK, but Photoshop's blend modes behave differently between CMYK and RGB, so I work in RGB. Once I'm happy with the base colours I merge the layers (apart from the text layer) and used the Convert to Profile command to convert my image to CMYK.



Impatience!

At this stage I should have started building up colours in the background and working on the overall palette, but my impatience gets the better of me and I start painting Red Riding Hood... I start with the obvious red coat and add a shadow layer and another layer for picking out details. I am trying to portray some of her uncertainty in her body language and facial expression, as this is an important aspect of the final illustration.

Building up colour
Once I've gained some of the
expression I'm looking for in Red Riding
Hood I decide I should get on with the

real job in hand. So I begin adding colours and basic detail into the overall image. I want a fairly muted palette in the dark bedroom. The version of the story I read suggested that the Wolf wanted dim light, so that Red Riding Hood wouldn't be able to tell that he'd eaten her Grandmother and had taken her place. I decide to pick out important detail with more saturated colours and light from the doorway and candle.



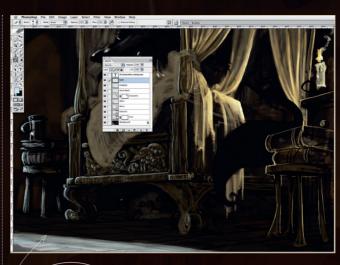
Wonkification

This is my special word for perspective, in my more stylised illustrations. The underlying sketch uses a more traditional two-point perspective on the bed and other furniture, but I decide it looks dull and predictable so the bed should have a little mild 'wonkification' around its base and something a little stronger on the canopy. Playing with perspective can add character. It is a luxury of a stylised piece.



Furniture

With the furniture partially 'wonkified', it's time to add detail and pick out objects around the bed, on the drawers and stools. Grandmother lives deep in the woods so I decide to pick out some carved woodland elements on the end of the bed. These are simply done: three hues of brown and ochre and little flashes of turquoise light from the doorway. Some of the other furniture is left in a more naïve state, because the forms only needed to be suggested.



Thortcuts lighting

Revert
F12 (Mac and PC)
Returns you to your last
saved version if you're not
happy with changes made
since then.

PRO SECRETS

Guides

I'm a big fan of guides. They can be incredibly useful when laying out an image, composing an image, establishing vanishing points for perspective or for accurate placement of elements within an image, such as text. To create a guide in Photoshop, simply drag from the rulers on the top or left-hand side of the screen. Rulers can be turned on and off within

Lighting

I've made some mention of the lighting already, but I opt for two main light sources. The doorway is casting light across Little Red Riding Hood and framing her in the blue light, which contrasts with the rest of the palette. I add a candle on the set of drawers, on the far right of the picture. I thought that this might distract the viewer from the characters, but it seems to balance the image, so I start illuminating the characters and objects with light from both sources.

(



Red Riding Hood
I've come much further with the
room and the furniture, so I think it's

time to continue painting Red Riding Hood. I add more details to her hair and coat and have some fun painting in flowers and apples. I'm helped by a book on wild flowers and an apple I was about to eat which had been sat on my desk all morning.



In depth Fairy tale illustration



The Big Bad Wolf

Once I'm happy with my progress on Red Riding Hood, I turn my attention to the neglected Big Bad Wolf. I use a few wildlife reference books and a couple of old National Geographic magazines to get better acquainted with wolf colouring and anatomy. I then ignore most of it while painting the wolf! The lovely thing about painting a stylised illustration is that you can make choices about how you use references to portray your subject. All that's really important about the wolf is that he should look cunning and sly and that he should be big and bad.

Take a break

I've been having a few reservations about how I have portrayed the wolf and I've been staring at my screen too long, so I take a long break. A spot of lunch, a walk in the park, a befuddling Sudoku and I'm back at my Mac after an hour. It's always useful to have a break from a piece of work and look at it with fresh eyes. It can be even more useful to ask someone else to look at it, even if they're not an artist. My girlfriend spotted a couple of mistakes and made some interesting suggestions. And I stuck with the wolf because it was her favourite bit!

More shadows
The shadow on the wall

The shadow on the wall is still looking crude and badly painted, so I give the wall a thick layer of paint and create a new layer for a crisper shadow. I lower the opacity of the layer and paint bold shapes with a hard-edged brush. I





PRO SECRETS

Calibration

I've mentioned colour management in this workshop, but the first step to accurate colours Calibrating is the process of measuring the colours your monitor displays to ensure it displays colours correctly. Photoshop provides a utility called Adobe Gamma for basic calibration. If you want a highly-accurate calibration it may be worth thinking about hardware calibration There are several products that sit on your screen and measure the colours being displayed. These tools vary in price, but if you want reliably-accurate colours it can be a

now go around with a hard-edged eraser to define the shape of the wolf's shadow and some cast shapes from the furniture. The use of an erase to define shapes in this way can be very effective.

Finishing touches

Once the wolf is finished I dart here and there adding details, such as the newspaper and the cat (that looks more like a dog) under the bed. I pick out more edges with rim lights and erase more of the black lines from the original sketch. I decide to leave a lot of these lines because I like the hint of the drawing they give the final image. After some pottering and pondering I decide to call it finished.

File formats

Saving is often overlooked in workshops and tutorials. I thought I'd mention some important considerations. I've mentioned colour management. It's important to save images in the appropriate mode. An embedded colour

profile will help tell the publisher or printer how the image should be displayed. It's also important to get the format right. Illustrations for print are usually saved as TIFFs, but remember to flatten the image if you don't need layers. When saving an image as a PSD, review your layers and merge and discard layers to optimise your image and keep the file size manageable.



Consider a series

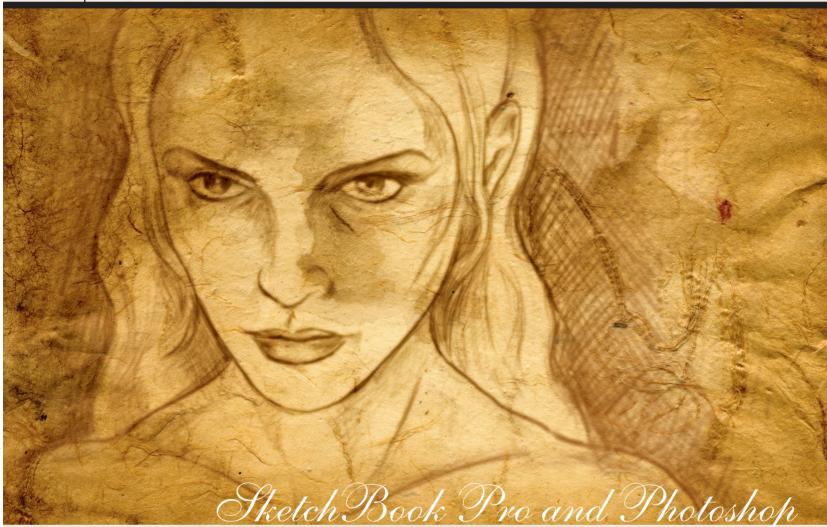
have produced one image that illustrates a snippet of the Little Red Riding Hood story. There are a host of other considerations when illustrating a story, such as the flow of the images from one to another; how you draw the readers' eyes as they arrive at a page; how to maintain consistency of character, palette and design. Sequential and narrative images can be immensely rewarding and fun to produce.

Evaluate

When everything is finished, I like to go back to an image after a week or two, once I've had time to forget it. I find it a useful exercise to evaluate a piece and consider what I might do differently pay

consider what I might do differently next time. It can also be enlightening to see an image in print. It always looks a little different to how you expect...







DVD Assets

Sketch Book Pro and Photoshop CREATE ANTIQUE SKETCHES

Derek Lea brews up a pot of tea to create stunning 'antique' sketch effects in SketchBook Pro and Photoshop.

ne thing I've learned from my experience as an illustrator, is that nothing is as rewarding as a willingness to experiment. Trying out new tools and techniques keeps your work fresh, it keeps you as an artist enthused about your work and it can be the gateway to new illustrative styles and techniques.

I don't need to explain the benefits of Photoshop to you, but I'd really like to draw your attention to Sketchbook Pro version 2. This application, from Alias, is a relative newcomer to the world of

creative software. Its design, ease of use and ability to enable perfectly natural results makes it an essential artist's tool for any pressure sensitive tablet user who intends to draw or sketch digitally. It's such an effortless and intuitive tool that it actually got me lost in the act of drawing on my Mac, for the first time.

I will show you how to create the sketch shown here, using Sketchbook Pro, and demonstrate the creation of an illustration with an aged, antique feeling. To achieve this effect convincingly, it was important to

step away from the computer. I went to a specialist paper store and bought some interesting handmade Japanese paper, to experiment with. I made a pot of tea - to paint on the paper, and allowed it to stain the surface and around the edges, giving the already rough surface an aged look.

Once the tea had dried, the paper was scanned into Photoshop where, through clever use of layers and alpha channels, it was combined with the exported Sketchbook Pro file to create an antique looking 'masterpiece.'





Quick technique Create antique sketches



Prepare to sketch
Launch Sketchbook Pro and create
a new file. The software is designed to
work with a drawing tablet, so pressing
and flicking are the methods used for
accessing all the tools. Press down on the
Brushes icon and flick the Pen over to the
Pencil option when it appears to use the
pencil as your drawing tool. Then press
down on the Colours icon and flick over
to the Black option. Begin to sketch
something. I start by drawing a woman's
face but you can go ahead and draw

Pen pressure

anything you like.

When you draw, you'll notice that Sketchbook Pro tools are sensitive to pen pressure. Pressure affects the opacity and thickness of the lines as you draw. Brush properties can be changes by first clicking on the current brush icon. This causes the appearances of the Brushes palette. Click the Sliders icon in the upper right to access the properties for your current brush. In the case of the pencil tool, you can alter the hardness/size of the pencil. Finish your sketch. Draw dark outlines and use lighter stokes to indicate shading. Have fun and take your time. If you cut

PRO SECRETS

Channel Options

By default, in an alpha channel, the colour white represents a selected area. Black represents a masked area, or one outside of a selection border. Greyscale values are indicative of how selected an area is. For example, a 50 per cent grey value indicates that an area will be 50 per cent selected when you generate a selection from a channel. If you want to reverse these properties, making black areas selected areas and white areas masked areas, double-click your alpha channel in the Channels palette. When the Channel Options dialog box appears, choose the Selected Areas option for colour and click OK.

corners here it will almost certainly annoy you each time you look at the finished art afterwards.

Launch Photoshop

Save the file and quit Sketchbook Pro. Launch Photoshop and open up the scan you made of the tea-stained paper. Navigate to the Channels palette within your open Photoshop file. We're going to create a new alpha channel to use as the basis for a new selection. The first thing you need to do is click on the Create New Channel button at the bottom of the Channels palette.

Copy and paste

Now, in Photoshop, open up your saved sketch that you created in Sketchbook Pro. Select all and copy and paste your selected image. Return to your paper scan file and target the new alpha channel by clicking on it in the Channels palette. Paste your copied sketch into your new alpha channel. Choose Image>



Use Control/Command+D to de-activate the selection. Change the Blending mode of the new layer to Multiply in the Layers palette. Choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur from the

menu and enter a radius of about 5 pixels

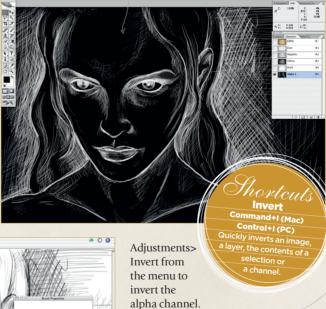
to soften the contents of the layer.

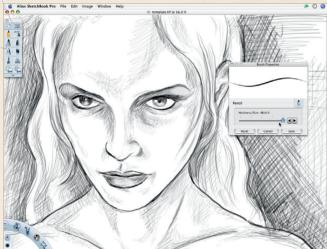
Opacity

Go back to the Channels palette and again load a selection from your alpha channel. Now go back to the Layers palette and with the selection active, create another new layer. Change the Blending mode of the new layer to Colour Burn, reduce the layer opacity to 85 per cent, and then fill the selection with the current foreground colour on this new layer too.

8 Fading

De-activate the selection and click Add Layer Mask to add a layer mask to this layer. Target the layer mask, then use the Linear Gradient tool with a black to transparent gradient preset, to add gradients within the layer mask from the outside edges inwards. This will fade the artwork around the edges of the paper. To intensify the sketch effect, duplicate the top layer via the duplicate option in the Layers palette menu. Reduce the opacity of this layer considerably so that the drawing isn't too sharp or pronounced. On a real antique drawing, the ink would bleed into the paper slightly, over time.





Layer colour

Hold down the Control/
Command key and click on the new
alpha channel thumbnail in the
Channels palette to generate a selection
from the white areas within the channel.
Navigate to the Layers palette. With the
current selection active, select Create
New Layer at the bottom of the Layers
palette. Click on the foreground colour
swatch in the Toolbox and select a brown
colour from the Picker.



Artist theory MAKING

Tap into your hidden 'raw' brush power - put a few abstract lines on a page and let your subconscious take control. Mattias Snygg explains...

Mattias Snygg COUNTRY: Sweden **CLIENTS:** White Wolf Publishing, Wizards of the Coast



painting and sculpture for three years before he became a concept artist

for videogame developer. Starbreeze. Artists Gustav Klimt and William Turner have been big influences. www.mattiassnygg.com

sing today's painting packages, can hold enough detail and elegance to be regarded as beautiful, and for an artist this opens up a wide range of possibilities.

A brush stroke can communicate huge amounts of information. It may describe a bit about the person holding the brush. Even though there is no real physical paint involved, the same basic principles

apply as in traditional painting. By letting paint extra dimension to a painting and open up to near-limitless

possibilities in the borderland between form and expression.

This picture began as a series of abstract marks on a white canvas, result would look like. By keeping a relaxed and intuitive attitude, you can allow your subconscious to take an active part in the process of painting. It's a very whereas if you are too rigid and

controlling, the end result might turn out

brush strokes in a painting. When I'm working on a piece such as this one, the foundations are laid down within the first 20 minutes of painting. That's when all the major decisions are made. modification will soften the impact of the image in favour of better drawing, composition and values.

66 This picture began as abstract marks on a white canvas without a defined idea 🤫

It's important during this stage to know when to stop, to allow for fresh and expressive marks and still offer enough refinement to make the image appealing in terms of realism and suggestion.

There is no rule to apply to this process, other than to be confident in your gut feeling. If you end up with a face that consists of a few squiggly lines and three dots of red, clearly defying everything you've learned at life your gut is trying to tell you something. will show you new and exciting things that you would never have thought of vourself.





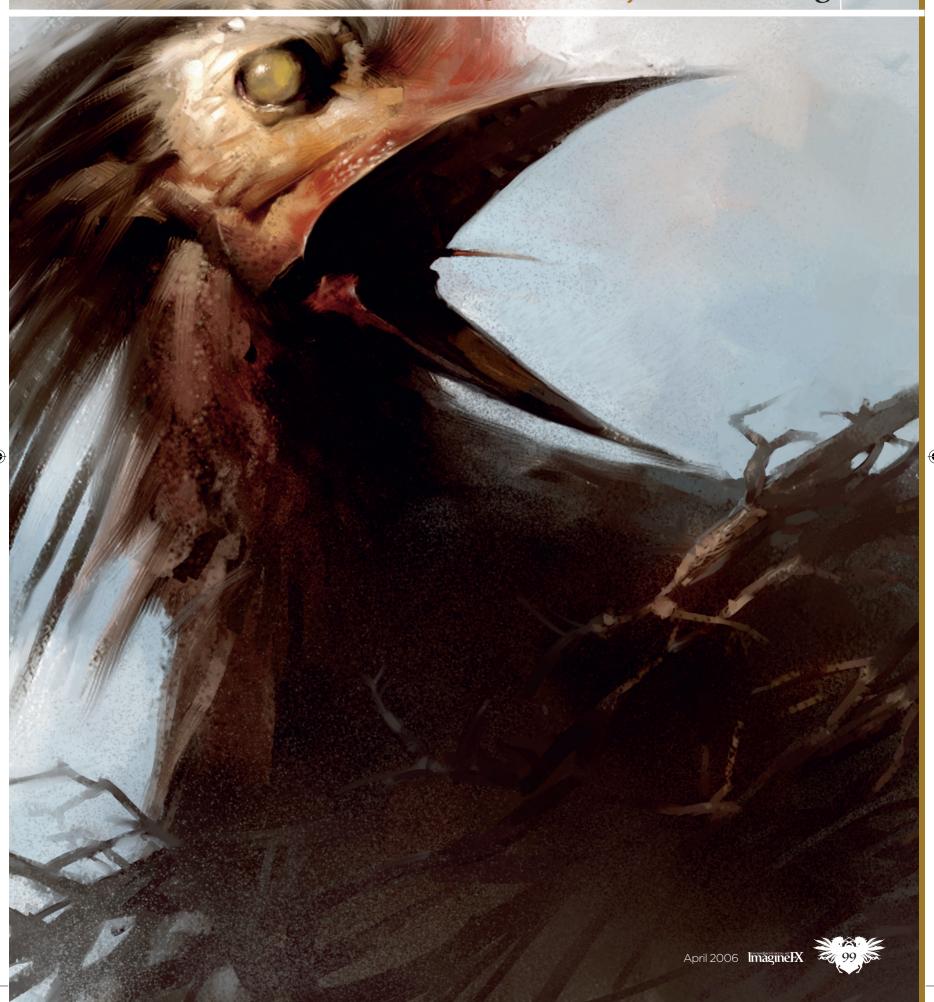
lmagine IX April 2006







Quick theory Mark making





Inasyesci-fi digital art Inasyesci-fi digital

The latest digital art software, hardware, books, training and film releases...





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SOFTWARE

102 Poser 6

3D figure design gets a boost



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A great all-round graphics bundle for vector illustration

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A quick and easy Photoshop plug-in for removing backdrops

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Free extras upgrade for the new Corel package

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How well does this upgrade rival Adobe's CS?



HARDWARE

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Wacoms too costly? Get a pen, tablet and mouse for £50!



106 Canon iP6600DQuality kit for the digital fantasy artist

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Learn the secrets of this acclaimed concept artist

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112 Sci-fi, gothic & more!

Harry Potter, The Brothers Grimm, Village of the Damned, Children of the Damned, Ninja Scroll, Submarine 707R and Heat Guy J



66 A collection of the world's most beautiful CG characters 99

RATINGS EXPLAINED AND AND Magnificent AND AND Good AND Ordinary AND Poor AND Atrocious









Software e frontier Poser 6



e frontier Poser 6

3D FIGURE DESIGN Take the frustration out of creating virtual characters and see why Poser remains head and shoulders above the competition.

PRICE \$250 COMPANY e frontier WEB www.e-frontier.com CONTACT Through website

oser should need little introduction to you. The software has become an essential utility to many artists, especially those working in the 3D arena, because it provides powerful yet easy to use controls for creating characters.

Improvements in this latest version hit you straight away, with revisions to the software's interface. This will be particularly welcomed by new users, who may have found previous versions increasingly difficult to comprehend.

Cosmetic changes aside, the software boasts important rendering changes that improve workflow significantly. The Production Frame feature displays the output aspect ratio directly in the document window, providing a realtime preview as you work. Area

Rendering enables you to focus on a specific region of your model at high resolution without waiting for the entire form to render. The new RenderWipe feature helps you review compared versions of your work.

ompared versions of your work. Lighting is also much improved, with

Image Based Lighting being introduced. It provides a 360-degree lighting source as well as influencing the improvements to shadow rendering. Here we find ambient occlusion and soft raytraced shadows as well as the ability to render shadows independently. Such changes add

demands to system resources but with OpenGL hardware acceleration added, along with the benefits of the new interface, Poser becomes not only the most powerful version of the software but the easiest and fastest to use.



ADAM

BENTONWe asked professional freelance

We asked professional freelance illustrator Adam Benton how he finds the latest version of Poser.

When did you start using Poser?

I played around with version 1 or 2 back in '96, but it wasn't until '99 and version 4 that I found how useable a tool it had become.

What work have you used it for?

A number of advertising and editorial illustration commissions and animation content – The Rod Stewart musical, Tonight's the Night, show posters and related advertising, Visa Winter Olympic 2002 posters and a few magazine covers.

What are the key improvements?

Compared to version 4, it's gained a lot of cool features. The multiple 'rooms' for working with materials, cloth simulation, dynamic hair etc are all very useful. The new Global Illumination and Ambient Occlusion lighting solutions are much more advanced. This version is much faster.

What are the benefits of Poser?

Access to an enormously versatile library of original and diverse figures, and vast clothing and prop additions to really customise them. For quick inclusion of easily poseable characters, there isn't anything like it.

What software combination do you use with Poser?

I started out using Bryce for the scenes/environment and lighting, and Poser for the figure content. Now I use Cinema 4D primarily, and Poser is used almost like an advance figure module which, with the help of a free plugin called InterPoser Ltd, is very intuitive and easily integrated.

Is it the best tool for the money?

Daz Studio is free and shows great promise, but I'm used to the Poser workflow. Poser has a 'budget' price, if used for professional illustration.



Adam Benton is a freelance illustrator whose work has featured in several CG magazines and books.

www.kromekat.com

April 2006 lmagineFX





Reviews



Xara Xtreme

VECTOR ILLUSTRATION A package that creates results comparable to bitmap should be an expensive luxury, right?

PRICE \$89 COMPANY Xara WEB www.xara.com CONTACT www.xara.com/contact.asp

Xtreme is a collection of titles that creates an all-round graphics bundle.
But, unlike the Corel one, Xara is aimed squarely at artists rather than graphic designers. Refreshingly, it doesn't assume the user is as occupied with technical computer matters. Instead, it presents its

s with CorelDRAW, Xara

available tools in a clean, intuitive manner, so you can concentrate on your artwork, not the software preferences.

The core on which Xtreme is focused is firmly in the vector camp, but don't be fooled into thinking its results will be cold and clinical. There are plenty of examples of vector artwork available that display how

possible it is to create more natural results. Xtreme is more than capable in achieving these.

Unlike many competitors, Xara has concentrated on making the software easy to use and lightning fast. Options such as vector transparency, blending and feathering are standard features and the application of such elements is as simple as dragging the mouse. Most

edits are carried out in realtime, using remarkably little memory, so you won't be forced to wait as objects rerender or your system grinds to an inspiration-sapping halt.

Familiarity with its methods will quickly improve your workflow. For its price there is simply nothing in its league for imaginative vector illustration.





Vertus Fluid Mask

PLUG-IN Isolate subjects from their backgrounds quickly and effectively in Photoshop

Price £179
Company Vertus
Web www.vertustech.com
Contact
+44 (0) 870 333 6901

Rating And And And

Removing objects from their original background has always proved time consuming and required more than the average amount of effort to master.

Masking unwanted areas is the best approach and Fluid Mask gives to Photoshop what Adobe should have provided years ago.

A simple interface enables you to select unwanted regions using an arsenal of tools, effective regardless of the complexity of the composition. You have additional controls to further extract problem areas and imply anti-aliasing to different coloured backgrounds.

It may not be the cheapest plugin, but a professional will soon make a return on their investment, in time spent on a routine yet tedious task.



Removing sky from a complex image such as this would take hours in Photoshop, without Fluid Mask.





Software Painting and plug-ins



Corel Painter IX.5

UPGRADE It only seems a moment since we saw Painter IX, so what's with this new freebie?

Price £249 full version; £FREE upgrade from IX
Company Corel
Web www.corel.co.uk
Contact
+44 (0) 1628 589800

Rating And And And

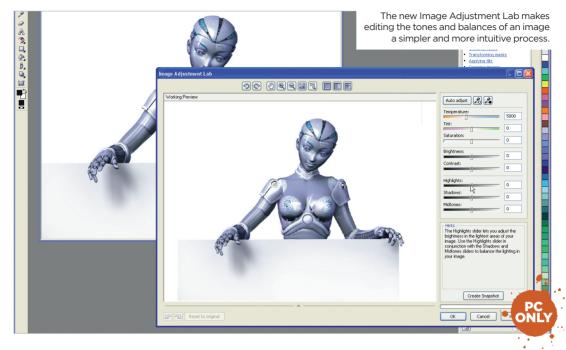
Although not a full upgrade, the latest version of Painter has substantial improvements. New Photo Painting palettes, including underpainting, auto-painting and restoration controls, convert an original photo into a more convincing hand-painted master easier than any other title.

The new Eraser tool will be warmly welcomed while the related Rubber Stamp and Cloner tools provide time-saving methods of duplicating content on a more subtle level. Ten new brushes will find plenty of use thanks to the extended Wacom support covering the Intuos3 and 6D Art Pen models.

Add in dual monitor support for Windows and support for Rosetta running on Intel-based Macs and there's plenty to get excited about.



Blending paints through Painter's mixer provides a more tactile way to emulate natural media in a digital environment.



CorelDRAW X3

DIGITAL IMAGING It might lack the power of Adobe's Creative Suite but what can Corel's upgrade offer the more creative artist?

PRICE £329/£149 COMPANY Corel WEB www.corel.co.uk CONTACT +44 (0) 1628 589800

eing centred on a vector application, CorelDRAW isn't the first application you'd consider when

creating fantasy or science fiction artwork. However the bundle of tools has been revised since the last version of the suite, to remove elements such as R.A.V.E, which failed to challenge the might

of Macromedia Flash.
Instead, Corel has chosen
to dwell more on fusing
together the best of both
worlds, with CorelPAINT
providing bitmap controls
and CorelDRAW catering
for more traditional
vector illustration.

One of the key improvements in this respect is the introduction of PowerTRACE. This provides impressive results when converting bitmap images into vectors, with options as to how detailed you want such a conversion to be.

The scaleable vector formats provide numerous advantages over raster, as

we've seen with Xara Xtreme, and this may be an area you choose to take your work, in which case PowerTRACE will be invaluable.

The most interest will be in PhotoPAINT. Less technically capable artists will welcome its new Image Adjustment Lab feature, which simplifies colour correction. The Cutout Lab has been improved to make

isolating subjects from their backgrounds simple – just draw a rough outline around an object to force PhotoPAINT to do all the hard work for you.

The brush size and shape controls show influences from stablemate application, Painter.

However, for the more creative artist, CorelDRAW

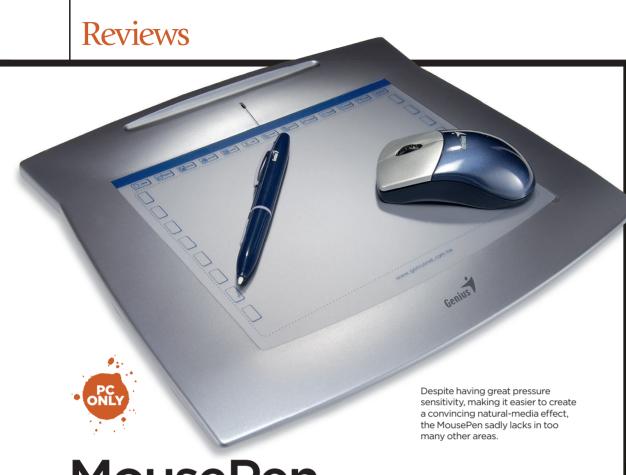
is too much of an all-round application. This weakness is a strength for graphic designers but if you're a fantasy artist you'll find that the PowerTRACE vector conversion options are the main reasons to consider parting with your cash.



April 2006 lmaginelX







MousePen

here's been a flux of Wacom

BUDGET TABLET Another inexpensive rival to a Wacom tablet hits the market - but does the MousePen really measure up?

PRICE £50 COMPANY Genius WEB www.genius-europe.com CONTACT +49 2173 9743 0

rivals recently – all aimed at the enthusiast rather than professional scribblers, and all carrying enticing price tags. The MousePen from the rather humbly named Genius is a prime example of one of these tablets – for under £50, you get a mouse, pen and an A5 8x6-inch active work area.

Unlike many budget tablets - the pressure sensitivity is here, with the MousePen having a Wacom-equalling 1,024-levels. For anyone unsure of what this means - basically it's how sensitive the tablet is to pen pressure. The harder you press, the darker, thicker the paint. The lighter you press, the lighter, thinner the stroke. And there's loads of levels in-between. On paper it's undeniably impressive.

But, like many Wacom competitors, the MousePen suffers from poor build quality. It's nothing like the quality of the Graphire range, even. The package feels rather cheap and plasticky. The pen is powered by an AAA battery, and feels a little unbalanced, and the mouse is best left in the box. It's just not what you want from something that you'll be using often.

The tablet, unlike the Graphire (which must be the product that Genius is targeting) has no transparency for digitally reproducing hand drawn sketches - a small detail, but one that is handy on the Wacom. The MousePen also uses buttons on the tablet accessed by the pen - for shortcuts. Since the introduction of ExpressKeys on the Graphire range, this feels like an old-fashioned way of speeding up workflow. Nevertheless we're glad there is something here in terms of shortcut keys. The supplied PenCommander software enables you to create shortcuts and customise commands further

We wish we could say that we've found a budget tablet that rivals a Wacom. Until that day comes, we'll stick by our guns and tell you to save up for a Graphire or Intuos – you won't find anything better for digital painting



Canon PIXMA iP6600D

COLOUR PRINTER A

good colour printer is essential to any artist even in this digital age.

Price £169 Company Canon Web www.canon.co.uk Contact +44 (0)870 514 3723

Rating & Landing

With all the of online forums and communities around, it's easy to forget about fantasy and sci-fi art being a tangible thing. The truth is though, work shines when in print – for example, one shift in colour due to a poorly calibrated monitor at your audience's end can change the whole feeling of a piece. And for this reason, especially if clients are involved, it's important to get your hands on a quality printer.

That said, you don't need to break the bank. The Canon PIXMA iP6600D delivers an accurate, fast and solid A4 printer with a few extra frills. Naturally we'd recommend professionally calibrating your monitor first (more on this next month). This model does a good job of producing vivid, high-quality prints of 2D art. It's also very quick, and pretty much silent. A nice addition is the 3.5-inch preview LCD. This means that if you're printing your work directly from a memory card, you can quickly navigate to the correct image. This model accepts all the major formats. Naturally you can still print directly from Photoshop, Painter and so on. A good printer for a great price...

(



The iP6600D has six separate ink tanks, which will help you keep costs down.





Reviews

Outstanding class and original style characterise Ballistic's look at CG beauty.



EXOTIQUE

DIGITAL STUNNERS A collection of 'The world's most beautiful CG characters'...

Editors Daniel Wade and Paul Hellard Publisher Ballistic Price US\$39 Web www.ballisticpublishing.com ISBN 1921002263

his aptly-titled and impressive collection, in paperback and special bound edition (\$99),

offers the high-quality presentation that we've come to expect from digital specialists at

Ballistic. The book incorporates classic digital images of feminine beauty along with contemporary and more striking alternatives on the theme.

The emphasis is on beauty in CG characters, so it provides a range of femme fatales. The works are dripping with visual narrative along with some stunninglyexecuted techniques.

The artwork delves into several realms of fantasy art, with the main focus being the female form. Therefore mingled in with sophisticated and finer art leanings are a few exceedingly-endowed fantasy depictions, chicks with guns, swords and spells. Futuristic and robotic genres are also in the cast.

As well as a gallery of 113 international artists from 37 countries, eight leading figures discuss how they created specific characters shown in the book and provide interesting insights into how they think and work, in both 2D and 3D. These are Linda

> Bergkvist, Oliver Ponsonnet, Henning Ludvigsen, Liam Kemp, Jason Chan, Pascal Blanché, Jean-Yves Lelcercq and Fred Bastide

The artistic potential of 21 software packages are demonstrated well. Obviously it includes the ubiquitous Photoshop and Painter but, usefully, it delves into art created with other applications, which will give you a good taster of what

can be achieved if you're thinking of investing in more software.

The editors have presented a treasure that celebrates some of the best marriages of fertile artistic minds and technology. Special offers are available on the website, if you're fast.

RATING & A CO

Further reading...

A stunning graphic novel, faeries revisited and more from the LA concept pros...

Concept Design 2 Seven top LA entertainment artists and guests



Editors Harald Belker et al **Publisher** Titan Books

Price £29.99

Web www.titanbooks.com

ISBN 1845762851

RATING ALLED ALLED

This art gallery sequel is an inspirational resource, with a broad range of visual feasts from the authors and fine entries from 17 famous guest artists. It caters for fans of monsters, sci-fi and aliens, plus guirky and deformed curiosities. Original approaches, with useful discussion on techniques, ideas and design exploration.

The Art of Faery Enchanted digital and traditional brushes...



Editor David Riché **Publisher** Paper Tiger **Price** £14.99

Web www.papertiger.co.uk

ISBN 1843403064

RATING ADADA

Faery 'godfather' Brian Froud suggests this is about faeries for the 21st century, but it seems a bit quaint, apart from a few faery nudes. The 22 artists wave their sparkly wands to give accomplished but sometimes unchallenging imagery in traditional and digital media. Warmhearted text, in the spirit of the theme.

The Fountain Graphic novel



Author Darren Aronofsky & Kent Williams **Publisher** DC Comics

Price US\$39.99

Web www.titanbooks.com

ISBN 1401200591

RATING AMADAM



The enthusiasm shines out in this innovative tale that was years in the making by the acclaimed film maker and award-winning painter duo. The graphic novel presents a dedicated comic 'take' on their accompanying film. It amplifies an engrossing, surreal and unsually-executed tale of love and mortality through three parallel lives, in different time periods.

Imagine X April 2006

FENG ZHU

Master of all things mechanical and a concept art genius, Feng is one of Hollywood's most sought-after artists.

Feng Zhu is something of a superstar in the concept art world. He began his career eight years ago, designing futuristic sets for Hollywood films. He then joined the gaming world, taking a position at Origin Systems, now Electronic Arts, in Austin, Texas. He was the sole concept designer, working on a successful series called Wing Commander.

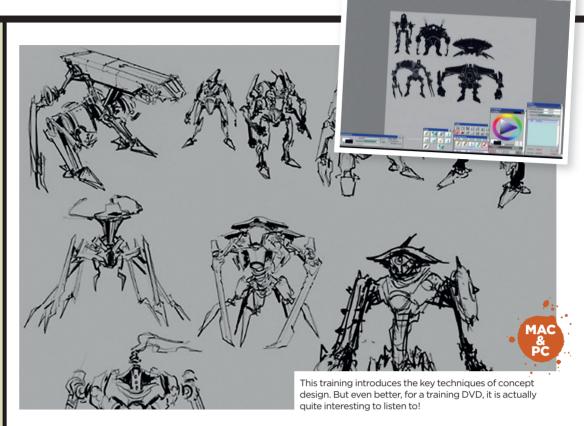
After Origin, Feng became one of the original members to join the GT Interactive Austin studio. He did a stint at Blur Studio, working with clients such as Disney and MTV, and was then invited to join the renowned art department at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch, to work on the feature film: Star Wars, Episode III. Feng worked closely with director George Lucas, presenting him with new artwork on a weekly basis for an entire year. He also worked with Industrial Light and Magic, providing the special effects studio with detail drawings and designs.

Feng delved into games for a while, joining NCSoft as creative director. He then returned to films in 2004, working with director James Cameron, designing sets and vehicles for his next sci-fi film. Besides working in-house for other studios, Feng has established himself as a successful freelance designer, under his own studio: Feng Zhu Design. His clients include Electronic Arts, Epic Games, Warner Bros, 3D Realms, Film Roman, Monster Garage, Epic Games, Sony Games, Wacom, and Microsoft. Furthermore, Feng is developing his own line of toys, to be launched soon.



Feng has taught industrial design for Gnomon School of Visual Effects and in industry.

w.fengzhudesign.com



The techniques of Feng Zhu

CONCEPT ART TRAINING Discover the secrets of creating cool mechanoids with one of the world's leading concept artists...

PRICE \$49 COMPANY The Gnomon Workshop WEB www.thegnomonworkshop.

eng Zhu is a legend. His techniques are copied by many and envied by more. If you're unsure of

who the genius is, take a look to the left and read his biography. This training DVD is the first in a series of three volumes explaining some of the core techniques of concept design, through Feng's eyes.

The DVD starts with an introduction by a remarkable chipper Feng (believe us, this is a welcome surprise for a training DVD). He introduces the techniques before launching into a speedy drawing session.

While it's incredibly interesting to see how Feng works on a sketch directly in Painter, it is easy to get lost as he

constantly rotates the canvas, adds more shading and tweaks his lines. It's not a DVD for beginners - a basic to intermediate knowledge of Painter is

definitely advised.

As the DVD progresses, Feng goes on to generate many thumbnails and then discusses the decisions behind choosing the final concepts for a client. It's all interesting. Anyone tempted to move from amateur to professional artist will benefit from Feng's generous and intelligent banter.

While rather specific, this DVD picks up on a few essential skills and techniques you'll need if you're to become a professional and successful concept artist. One more bonus: the DVD is extremely interesting.



Chapters:

- 4. Strong silhouettes

- 7. Thumbnail line-up 8. Final touches

Length:



Reviews

The third Hogwart outing delves into the dark side, investing heavily in CG effects and art design.



Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

MAGIC EFFECTS The latest DVD from J K Rowling's realm gives insight into effects and design...

Distributor Warner Home Video **Certificate** 12 **Price** £25.99

agic, danger and raging teenage hormones dominate the latest Harry Potter adventure, which gradually edges the comfy,

borderline-twee charm of Hogwarts into darker, more grown-up territory.

The SFX team has gone into overload creating vivid setpieces, like an attack from a spiny, fire-breathing dragon and a sentient hedge maze, reminiscent of The Shining. And the story develops a serious edge. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) finds himself participating in the highly dangerous Triwizard Tournament and fights for his life.

Newcomer, Mike Newell, gives energetic direction, but lacks the lush, artful visual style that Alfonso Cuaron brought to Prisoner of Azkaban. He doesn't quite counter the problem of cramming a 500-page book into two and a half hours

Veering between hyperactive and ponderous, it's a bizarrely-paced movie that takes a while to find its feet, and may leave anyone who hasn't read the novels scratching their heads in confusion. Despite this, it's never long

> before another entertaining highlight arrives, and the whole film builds to an impressive climax, as Ralph Fiennes scares the hell out of everybody in the longawaited appearance of Lord Voldemort.

Fiennes is among the stars on the disc extras, talking through his role in a brief featurette. The whole selection is a big improvement on previous Potter discs, with much

more background on the techniques behind the effects and design work although it's still firmly aimed at the kids in the audience.

Other new releases...

Sci-fi chillers, gothic fairy tales and special effects abound...



The Brothers Grimm

Distributor Buena Vista Home Entertainment

Certificate 12 **Price** £19.99

RATING & &

Terry Gilliam's the Brothers Grimm plots Heath Ledger and Matt Damon as con men who fake supernatural nasties, then charge villages for getting rid of them. Unfortunately, they're then pitted against a real threat - an immortal queen who needs the blood of 12 children to regain her youth...

It's a triumph of production design. There's a stunning enchanted forest: a dark fairy tale landscape of walking trees, gothic statuary and spiralling branches. It also features some memorably grotesque set-pieces: a horse swallows one child whole; a mud monster steals the eyes and mouth of another. But what should be a simple, heart-warming story is



desperately long-winded and populated by characters it's hard to care about.

It's unlikely you'll have the appetite for the director's commentary, deleted scenes and 'making of' featurettes.



Village Of The Damned/ **Children Of The Damned**

Distributor Warner Home Video (HMV Exclusive)

Certificate 12

Price £24.99 (two-disc set)

RATING AMADA

Village of the Damned adapts John Wyndham's classic novel, The Midwich Cuckoos. It tells the story of an ordinary English village which suffers a blackout, then wakes to find its woman have been impregnated... The resulting blond, shiny-eyed children are some of the eeriest creatures in screen sci-fi, with a total lack of childlike joy, vulnerability or tenderness. These creepy kids can will anyone who crosses them into suicide.

Children of the Damned, a sequel produced a couple of years later, favours a more politicised approach (the



screenwriter went on to pen Gandhi and Cry Freedom) but is rather dry and talky. It's certainly far less chilling than Village, which remains one of the best sci-fi films ever to have come out of

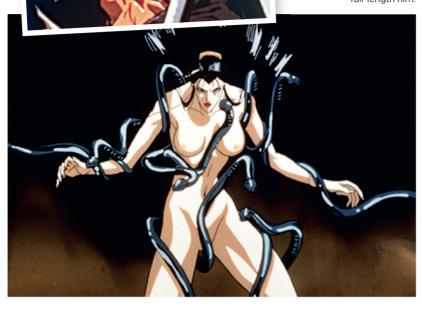
RATING & & &

Imagine X April 2006



DVDs Film and anime

The TV ninja tale finally takes on some clout in this full-length film.



Ninja Scroll

SUPERHERO ACTION Definitive hack 'n' slash ninja yarn.

Studio Madhouse Distributor Manga Certificate 18 Price £10

his one's not a good choice if you're a feint-hearted viewer or if you have a prudish temperament.

Ninja Scroll follows the full-on adventures of itinerant ninja, Jubei Kibagami, as he battles to

foil the plans of a bunch of bloodthirsty demons.

Set during the Edo period of Japanese history, when the Samurai were at the height of their powers, Ninja Scroll pits a familiar supercool hero against a host of well-conceived adversaries, while allying him with an interesting cast of misfits.

The plot - which involves
the theft of a gold shipment for
some obscure political purpose - is
secondary to the action. What Ninja
Scroll offers is great characters with
'complicated' relationships, all trying to
hack and slay one another using an
array of super-strength ninja moves
and underhand demon magic.

As an example of the choice of complications, not only is Jubei conscripted by an undercover ninja grandad but his love interest - a female ninja called Kagero - is actually poison to the touch. This device obviously serves to make the erotic overtones

of the movie all the more effective, as this deadly ice maiden begins to fall for the honourablyintentioned Jubei.

Just like his ninja hero, respected writer/director, Yoshiaki Kawajiri puts not a foot wrong for the full 90 minutes. This established animation guru created the characters for the theme's TV series, too, but the film far surpasses it. When the credits start rolling you'll be

scrambling for the extra disc that comes with the 2004 Manga repackaged edition.

RATING A A A A

Also look at...

Good versus evil quests take on a stylish anime and futuristic edge.



Heat Guy J

Studio Satelight Inc Distributor Manga

Certificate 18
Price £15

RATING Andrian

J is an android who gets a bit hot under the collar when he's chasing mafia villains around skyscrapers. With laid back partner, the very human Dice, they make a cops 'n' robbers odd couple, pitted against the increasingly-deranged scion of Judoh city's biggest crime family - Clair Leonelli. This masochistic fop will stop at nothing in his bid to make his family overlords of the underworld.

The animation is top-notch throughout the massive run time. Futuristic Judoh City is well drawn, while J and Dice fit the picture perfectly. Their involvement with a web of gangland enemies and informants slowly draws you in, as the



series progresses. Heat Guy J won't shake your world up, but if you like cops and robbers it's a safe bet. Its unlikely to gather dust thanks to clever characterisation, intelligent dialogue and quality design.

(



Submarine 707R

Studio Aniplex
Distributor Manga
Certificate PG

Price (on Amazon) £14.99
RATING Ly Ly Ly Ly

An instant classic. Rich characters, great storyline, quality animation and flawless storytelling make this highly addictive. This DVD sees missions 1 and 2 stitched together to form a single movie-length offering, which ends far too quickly.

It charts rich and powerful nations under threat from an organisation calling itself the Underwater Silence Revolution (USR). The simple and honourable goal of this shadowy force is to free the seas of evil warships and submarines. The 11 toughest nations form a Peace Keeping Navy, but things start going wrong on day one when the elusive UX, flagship of the USR, gatecrashes their founding-day regatta.

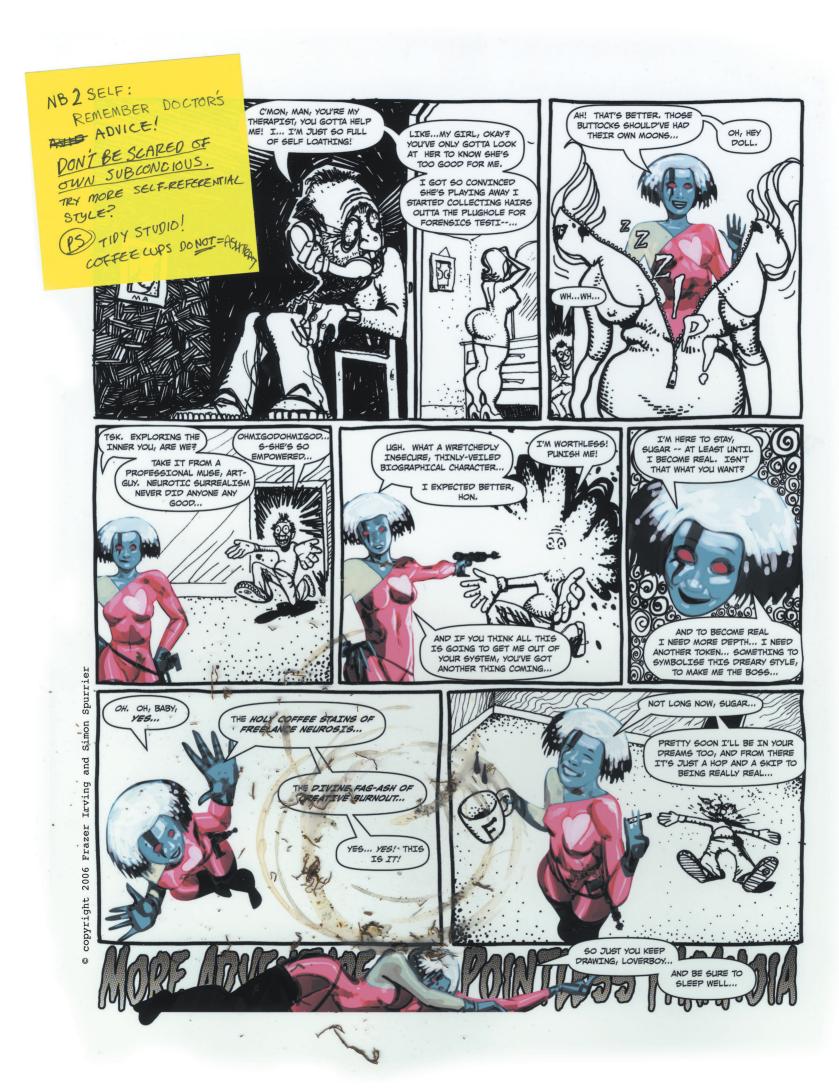


Coming from the same stable as Appleseed and Neon Genesis, the credits read like a who's who of anime. In other genres this might be cause for concern, but director Shoichi Masuo pulls off something special.

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Imagine X

Featured artists this issue...



Henning Ludvigsen

"All my characters have their own separate stories" Page 46



Linda Tso
"You must learn about colour from the offset" Page 42



Gary Tonge

"What we see is a fraction of what there actually is" Page 56





